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CLASS CONFLICT AND RACIST IDEOLOGY IN THE FORMATION OF MODERN GUYANESE SOCIETY

by

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled Class Conflict and Racist Ideology in the Formation of Modern Guyanese Society submitted by Dennis Bartels in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Date. 22 March 1978

This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of Grace Lonergan Lorch (1903-1974) who, as a trade unionist and civil rights activist, devoted her life to struggles for racial equality, women's rights, and an end to class oppression.

ABSTRACT

Throughout Guyanese colonial history, the ruling class applied a policy of disproportionate allocation of economic benefits and burdens to different subordinated ethnic groups. This policy was justified in terms of ruling class racial stereotypes of Indo-Guyanese Afro-Guyanese, and Portuguese, and resulted in social and economic disparities between these groups. During periods of economic crisis, workers of all ethnic groups engaged in concerted industrial and political action against the ruling class. But in spite of such periodic cooperation, Afro-Guyanese, Indo-Guyanese, and Portuguese workers often used ruling class racial stereotypes in attempts to strengthen their social and economic positions vis-à-vis each other. This process maintained and strengthened ethnic boundaries and conflict among working class ethnic groups, and thus protected ruling class interests. Pluralist and cultural-ecological approaches to Guyanese society seldom take these processes into account.

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CHAPTER I

A CRITIQUE OF NON-CLASS APPROACHES TO INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS

Introduction

During the early 1960's, international attention was directed toward inter-ethnic conflict and violence in former British Guiana (now the Co-operative Republic of Guyana). Subsequently, several anthropologists have focused their attempts to explain inter-ethnic conflict and maintenance of ethnic boundaries on Guyanese society. Their discussion of inter-ethnic relations in Guyana has concentrated almost exclusively upon cultural differences, competition for scarce resources, and conflict between ethnic groups. This emphasis has had the serious consequence of diverting attention from historical instances of cooperation between subordinated ethnic groups in struggles against entrepreneurs (mainly European plantation owners) and colonial governments. As early as 1678, Carib Indians and African slaves joined in an insurrection against the Dutch planters in Surinam. This insurrection threatened the neighbouring Dutch colony of Berbice which later became part of British Guiana. In 1847-48, East Indian and Portuguese indentured plantation labourers joined recently emancipated slaves in strikes for higher wages. In 1904-05, and in 1924, East Indian plantation labourers joined Afro-Guyanese workers in strikes and 'riots' against employers and the colonial government. And from 1950 to 1955, the Peoples Progressive Party (the ppp), based upon support from Indo- and Afro-Guyanese workers and farmers, threatened large entrepreneurs and the colonial government with socialism.

On the other hand, anthropologists and historians can point to

numerous instances of conflict and to the maintenance of ethnic boundaries between subordinated ethnic groups. Amerindians often killed or captured runaway slaves, and hostility between Blacks and Amerindians became a prominent feature of Guyanese slave society. The strikes of 1847-48 culminated in attacks on East Indians and Portuguese indentured labourers by Blacks. In 1856 and 1889, East Indians and Afro-Guyanese looted Portuguese-owned shops. And from 1962 to 1964, political division and conflict between Indo- and Afro-Guyanese captured worldwide attention.

Guyanese colonial history was characterized by two contradictory tendencies: a tendency toward co-operation between subordinated ethnic groups based upon resistance to foreign entrepreneurs and colonial governments, and a tendency toward conflict and the maintenance of ethnic boundaries between subordinated ethnic groups. What is needed is an explanation or conceptual approach that can take both of these tendencies into account. The main aim of this dissertation will be to show that a class perspective provides the most adequate explanation of these tendencies. Instances of co-operation between subordinated ethnic groups can be explained, from a class perspective, by reference to their common struggle against exploitation by large entrepreneurs (often plantation owners of European descent) and colonial governments. Instances of conflict and maintenance of ethnic boundaries between subordinated ethnic groups can be explained, from a class perspective by reference to ruling class policies of disproportionate allocation of economic benefits and burdens to different subordinated ethnic groups. These policies were 'justified' in terms of ruling class racial stereotypes of Indo- and Afro-Guyanese, and resulted in social and economic disparities between

these groups. Ruling class racist ideology pervaded newspapers, and was presupposed by most clergymen; it was accepted, in varying degrees by Indo-Guyanese, Afro-Guyanese, and Portuguese. They often used ruling class racial stereotypes in attempts to strengthen their social and economic positions vis-à-vis each other. This promoted the growth of ethnic conflict and boundaries and inhibited unity in struggles against the ruling class.

In the remainder of this chapter, it will be shown that accounts of Guyana's inter-ethnic conflict and maintenance of ethnic boundaries which are not based upon a class perspective either (1) do not explore the racist ideology and policies of European and North American governments, entrepreneurs, and the colonial government in former British Guiana, which created and maintained conflict and boundaries between subordinated ethnic groups; or (2) ignore the instances of inter-ethnic cooperation along class lines which occurred throughout Guyanese colonial history.

Models of inter-ethnic relations which do not deal specifically with Guyana will also be treated in this chapter. It will be shown that they also fail to emphasize the existence of, or relations between, the sorts of contradictory tendencies noted above. A model of social processes in former British Guiana which attempts to take these contradictory tendencies into account will be presented in Chapter II. This model will be explicitly based upon a class perspective.

Section 1 - J.S. Furnivall's Approach to Inter-Ethnic Relations in Tropical Colonies

Conflict and maintenance of ethnic boundaries between Indo- and Afro-Guyanese have often been explained by social scientists in terms of

theories of social or cultural pluralism (see M.G. Smith 1965a: x: Despres 1967). While formulations of pluralist theory vary, there are certain themes that recur in most of them. All formulations of pluralist theory are mainly concerned with persistent cultural or institutional differences between 'racial' or ethnic groups within the same society or political unit. J.S. Furnivall, the economist whose research upon the economic impact of colonialism in the tropics served as the basis for the development of pluralist theory, noted that populations in tropical colonies often consisted of a "medly of peoples", usually European, Chinese, East Indian and indigenous native peoples, who "mix but do not combine".

> Each group holds by its religion, its own culture and language, its own ideas and ways. As individuals they meet, but only in the market-place, in buying and selling. There is a plural society, with different sections of the community living side by side, but separately, within the same political unit (1948: 304).

> ...but one finds a plural society also in independent states, such as Siam, where Natives, Chinese and Europeans have distinct economic functions, and live apart as separate social orders. Nor is the plural society confined to the tropics; it may be found also in temperate regions where, as in South Africa and the United States, there are both white and coloured populations. Again, one finds a plural society in the French provinces of Canada...(1944: 446).

Another feature of most formulations of pluralist theory is a concern with integration or social cohesion in plural societies. Given the existence of plural sections, what holds a society together? What prevents its cultural sections from clashing or from ceasing contact altogether? Furnivall found answers to such questions in the colonial expansion of Western European nations.

> In a plural society the sections are not segregated; the members of the several units are intermingled and meet as individuals; the union is not voluntary but is imposed by

> the colonial power and by the force of economic circumstances; and the union cannot be dissolved without the whole society relapsing into anarchy (1956: 307).
>
> The dominant impulse in Western expansion over the Tropics has been economic advantage, and the liberation of economic forces under foreign rule has transformed social life into a huge business concern with numerous departments. The social order has taken the form of plural society in which distinct racial groups, devoid of any common social will, live side by side but separately (1946: 123-124).

Furnivall also argued that the imposition of capitalist social relations and colonial rule transformed traditional cultures and created a "situation of social atomization in which individualism .... became the main driving force" (Furnivall 1956: 307). In light of these conditions, it was only the threat or use of force by colonial powers that prevented further division or conflict between plural sections from causing economic and social disruption (1956: 307).

Furnivall saw capitalism as a divisive force not only in plural societies, but in Western European societies as well. He believed, however, that the divisive effects of capitalism had been mitigated in the West by the rule of law, Christian moral teaching, and the spread of nationalistic sentiments among all strata of the populations of Western European nations. These tendencies created a "common social will" that was absent in tropical colonies (1947: 67; 1948: 304). Thus Furnivall characterized the former as "homogeneous societies", and the latter as "plural societies". Proponents of pluralist theory have often argued that Western social scientific theories which were formulated for application to so-called homogeneous societies in Western Europe might not be applicable to plural societies (see Rauf 1972: 11-12).

In spite of ethnic divisions in plural societies, Furnivall saw the main problem of colonial policy as "how best to induce dependent

peoples to acquiesce in foreign rule without prejudice to the development of the colonial estate", and pointed out that the most effective solution to this problem was a strategy of "divide-and-rule" (1946: 123-124).

Thus, Furnivall argues that plural societies are composed of antagonistic ethnic groups. It is only the threat or use of force by colonial authorities that prevents these groups from clashing; without this threat or use of force, plural societies would relapse into anarchy.* At the same time, Furnivall noted the necessity of a colonial policy of "divide-and-rule" in order to protect the colonial estate. These two claims seem contradictory. If subordinated ethnic populations can only be kept from each other's throats by the threat or use of force by colonial authorities, why must colonial authorities use a "divide-and-rule" policy? The fact that Furnivall acknowledges the necessity for colonial authorities to "divide-and-rule" seems to imply the possibility of co-operation between subordinated ethnic populations in struggles against the colonial authorities and exploitation. Yet Furnivall does not explore this possibility. Instead, he concentrates on cultural differences and the potential for conflict between subordinated ethnic groups without relating these phenomena to the "divide-and-rule" policies which he regards as necessary for the maintenance of the colonial estate. It seems that these problems could be

---

* It should be noted that this element of pluralist theory can serve as a justification for the perpetuation of colonial rule. It can be argued that, if termination or relaxation of colonial rule will inevitably produce ethnic conflict and/or anarchy, colonial rule should not be terminated or relaxed. This argument often attributes the potential for ethnic conflict to the alleged 'racial' characteristics of subordinated ethnic populations rather than the "divide-and-rule" policies of colonial powers. At least Furnivall acknowledged the existence of the latter, although he did not explore them in detail.

resolved by viewing colonial "divide-and-rule" policies as responses to potential or actual co-operation between subordinated ethnic groups in struggles against colonial rule and exploitation. These "divide-and-rule" policies could, in turn, account for conflict and maintenance of boundaries between ethnic groups. As we shall see, these processes occurred repeatedly in Guyanese colonial history. It seems likely that the failure of Furnivall to explore these processes was due to the absence of a class perspective in his work.

Section 2 - The Pluralism of M.G. Smith

M.G. Smith regarded Furnivall's distinction between plural and homogeneous societies as useful, but decided that it was in need of theoretical elaboration (1960: 763). After defining a 'society' as "...a territorially distinct unit, having its own governmental institutions" (1960: 766), he followed Nadel in distinguishing between "alternative" and "compulsory" institutions; the former are available to individuals who may use them if they wish (e.g., voluntary organizations), while the latter must be utilized at some point by all individuals in any society (e.g., the family of orientation). M.G. Smith then defined pluralism in terms of differences in compulsory institutions (viz., kinship, education, religion, property and economy, recreation, and certain sodalities), and minority control of intersectional relations (1960: 769).

> I have tried to show that the institutional system that forms the cultural core defines the social structure and value system of any given population. Thus populations that contain groups practicing different forms of institutional system exhibit a corresponding diversity of cultural, social, and ideational patterns. Since any institutional system tends toward internal integration and consistency, each of these differentiated groups will tend to form a closed socio-cultural unit. Such pluralistic conditions are far more wide-spread than are plural societies, the distinctive

feature of which is their domination by a cultural minority.

> Plural societies depend for their maintenance on the regulation of intersectional relations by one or other of the component cultural sections. When the dominant section is also a minority, the structural implications of cultural pluralism have their most extreme expression, and the dependence on regulation by force is greatest (1960: 774).

M.G. Smith argued that much of Western social scientific theory, which assumes the presence of a consensual normative system, cannot be applied to plural societies where no such consensus exists (1965a: vii-xii).

It is clear that M.G. Smith, like Furnivall, was concerned with persistent cultural or institutional differences between 'racial' or ethnic groups in the same society. He was also concerned with the problem of social cohesion and integration in plural societies. Like Furnivall, M.G. Smith argued that plural societies "depend for their order on regulation by force" (1965a: xi-xii).

M.G. Smith characterized plural societies, particularly those in the British West Indies, as "defined by dissensus and pregnant with conflict" (1965a: xiii, 113); he wrote that "whatever the form of the political system, the differing sectional values within a plural society are a profound source of instability" (1960: 776). Smith clearly recognized the role of colonial entrepreneurs and governments in promoting ethnic divisions:

> it is...necessary to distinguish....societies....in which the dominant cultural section constitutes a small minority wielding power over the unit as a whole. Under such conditions this dominant minority is inescapably preoccupied with problems of structural maintenance and economic and political control. For this reason it may actively seek to discourage acculturation among the subordinate majority, since the current incompatibility of their institutional systems is held to justify the status quo. This has happened in the British West Indies on several occasions, and is in 1960 the major issue in British East and Central Africa (1965: 87-88).

> As the Caribbean slave literature shows most clearly, the function of racism is merely to justify and perpetuate a pluralistic social order (1965: 89).

Yet while Guyana is regarded as a paradigm example of a plural society, M.G. Smith and other proponents of pluralist theory have not undertaken a detailed examination of the historical role played by colonial entrepreneurs and governments in promoting strife or in maintaining distinctions between subordinated ethnic populations. This seems odd in light of historical work on Caribbean society by M.G. Smith(1965), and in light of the relevance of this topic to the generation of ethnic conflict in former colonies. Furthermore, M.G. Smith's emphasis on dissensus and institutional disparity between Caribbean ethnic groups precludes any serious discussion of how such groups as Indo- and Afro-Guyanese could cooperate successfully in the formation of the PPP during the early 1950's. Other plural theorists have also neglected this issue.

R.T. Smith and Lloyd Braithwaite have suggested an explanation of intersectional conflict in British West Indian societies that is usually opposed to M.G. Smith's (see Rauf 1972: 18). They argue that in multi-ethnic colonial or post-colonial societies, such as those in the present and former British West Indies, the high valuation placed upon the European or Anglo-American culture and life-style served as a common integrating factor which is more important than 'plural' identities (Braithwaite 1960: 816-838; R.T. Smith 1971: 424-425). R.T. Smith goes on to argue that acquisition of Anglo-American values by all strata in Guyanese society does not necessarily make for inter-sectional harmony based upon a common value system; instead, it can have the opposite effect: "...it is in the Georgetown [Guyana's capital city] 'middle class', where life-styles are more uniform, that racial sentiment is apt to be most bitter." This is related to the fact that lack of industrial development limits

high status employment to civil service and professional occupations; thus, competition for high status jobs by members of plural sections that share 'middle class' values is often very fierce, and expressed in 'racial' terms (1971: 424). R.T. Smith sttributed lack of industrial development and economic opportunity in Guyana to "the fact that Englishmen, Canadians, and Americans control the economy with it, the basic structure of society" (1971: 427).* He also clearly recognized the role played by the U.S. and British governments in promoting political division and conflict between Indo- and Afro-Guyanese during the 1960's (1971: 426). Yet while R.T. Smith recognizes the role of colonial entrepreneurs and governments in promoting ethnic conflict throughout Guyanese history, he has not examined this topic in detail. Also, his inventory of values shared by large sectors of Indo- and Afro-Guyanese has not placed sufficient emphasis on resentment of exploitation by European and North American entrepreneurs, and aspirations towards socialism. Both of these sentiments played a large role in the rise of the PPP and in more recent instances of inter-ethnic cooperation such as the squatters' movement of 1973 (see Chapter VIII).

The debate on pluralism in the social science literature of the 1960's was apparently based upon the notion that Guyanese society must either be divided by ethnic conflict which stemmed from differences in systems of values or institutions, or harmoniously united by common values and institutions. It is now widely recognized that this dichotomy was not exhaustive. R.T. Smith and Leo Despres have both pointed out that different ethnic groups may share values insofar as they aspire to affluent

---

* In May, 1976, the nationalization of Guyana's sugar industry was completed, thus bringing most of Guyana's major productive enterprises under state ownership.

life-styles; however, in a context structured by tontinuing scarcity of economic resources, such groups can come into conflict. Thus, pluralism and conflict, or consensus and harmony, are not the only possible alternatives. In this dissertation, it is argued that tendencies toward inter-ethnic conflict based upon competition for scarce resources, and promoted by the policies and practices of foreign entrepreneurs and governments, have coexisted with tendencies toward inter-ethnic cooperation in industrial and political struggles aimed at relieving the economic scarcity noted above. The recognition that these tendencies can coexist in a multi-ethnic colonial or neo-colonial society provides an alternative to the proposition that such societies must be characterized by consensus or 'pluralism'.

Schermerhorn similarly rejects an "either-or" dichotomy between a "power-conflict" approach and a "functional systems" approach. He claims that conflict between groups of unequal power engender integrative bonds that have system (i.e., functional) characteristics (1970: 53). In supporting this claim, he cites Gluckman's research on British colonial penetration of Southern Africa. On the one hand, the interests of the British and their tribal allies were ultimately opposed, since the British wanted access to tribal land. Analysis of this relationship would apparently require a power-conflict approach. On the other hand, the tribal allies needed the British to protect them from their traditional enemies. Analysis of the latter relationship would apparently require a "functional systems" approach. Schermerhorn correctly notes that conflict and integration (or cooperation) should not be regarded as pure opposites, but as part of a single process (1970: 58-59). He apparently fails to note that superordinate groups may allocate a disproportionately large amount of scarce resources to one of a number of subordinated groups, and

that this may inhibit concerted efforts by subordinated groups to alter the social order. In such a case, the "integration" or "cooperation" between the superordinate group and the subordinated group which received a disproportionate share of scarce resources, serves to protect or extend the privileged position of the superordinate group - i.e., it is a policy that can be most successfully explained in terms of power-conflict or class analysis. As we shall see in later chapters, this sort of process occurred quite frequently in Guyanese colonial history.

Section 3 - The Pluralism of Leo Despres

Despres accepted M.G. Smith's view that "institutional differences serve to distinguish differing cultures and social units" (1967: 21), but rejected Nadel's and Smith's distinction between "compulsory" and "alternative" institutions (1967: 21). Despres substituted a distinction between "local" institutions, "which serve to structure activities and express cultural values within the context of local communities", and "broker" institutions, "which function to link local activities to the wider sphere of societal activity" (1967: 23). When local groups are distinguished by different local institutions, and when these distinctions are reinforced by the operation of different broker institutions, the plural model is relevant for analysis of the society in question.

> Maximal or national cultural sections will exist when broker institutions e.g., trade unions, corporations, religious organizations, etc. serve to integrate, separately, similar minimal cultural sections and thereby allow for the expression of their characteristic cultural values in national spheres of social activity (1967: 25).

With regard to the problem of integration in plural societies, Despres followed M.G. Smith in claiming that,

> Plural societies....depend for their maintenance on the regulation of intersectional relations by one or another of the component cultural sections. When the dominant section constitutes a minority group, as is usually the case, political order is secured primarily by force or the threat of force (1967: 19).

However, while Despres explicitly rejected the claim that relaxation or termination of minority control in plural societies necessarily engenders intersectional conflict (1967: 28), he added that

> ....there can be little doubt that cultural pluralism provides fertile soil for the growth of particularistic forces and that such forces can become serious obstacles to the achievement of politico-cultural integration in new nations where colonial powers have been removed from governmental structures (1967: 27).

He also claimed that such "particularistic forces" can be used by political leaders in newly-emerging nations in order to gain their respective political ends. Such uses sometimes engender inter-sectional conflict (1967: 29). The main point of Despres' 1967 study is that Guyana is a plural society in the sense outlined above, and that the violent conflict which occurred between Indo- and Afro-Guyanese in 1962, 1963, and 1964 was a result of the use of "particularistic forces" by Guyanese political leaders to gain their respective political ends.

It has been suggested that Despres, by concentrating on institutions, has downgraded or ignored the importance of other social factors and processes in plural societies. Malcolm Cross claims that an exclusive concentration on institutions cannot adequately take revolutions, sudden changes, or the interaction which occurs between and within groups in any "real social situation" into account (1971: 485-86). H.I. McKenzie argues that,

> The concentration on establishing that Indians and Africans are minimal cultural sections leads to a corresponding lack

> of attention (at the conceptual level) to differentiation within each section....it seems clear that Guyana is divided along both ethnic-cultural and socio-economic class lines. A satisfactory account of the society needs to deal adequately with both types of differentiation (1970: 638-39).

Despres characterized the view that Guyanese society is divided along both ethnic-cultural and socio-economic class lines as the "reticulated model" (1967: 19). He dismissed it on the grounds that it could not be used to predict conflict (1967: 19). It seems clear, however, that in a 'reticulated society', both class conflict and inter-ethnic conflict might sometimes occur, especially in a colonial context where resources available to subordinated ethnic groups are limited because of colonial exploitation (see R.T. Smith 1971: 424).

Other critics point out that Despres' version of pluralist theory fails to account for the rise of the multi-ethnic PPP in the early 1950's, and the intervention of the governments of Britain and the U.S. in Guyanese affairs during the 1960's. K.W.J. Post writes,

> If the allegiance to plural sections is at all times constant and overriding, how then do we explain the success of the P.P.P. in bringing together Africans and Indians in 1950-53? The answer is, of course, the common oppression of the masses of both at the hands of the colonial system, something of which Professor Despres might have made far more had he not rejected class as part of his theoretical apparatus....
> Guyanese political development since 1953 has not been determined by the plural society, but by British and U.S. policy. This has been the constant in the situation, not the plural society. At every crucial point where the allocation of political power has been involved.... it has been intervention from outside which has decided the matter. It is remarkable, for example, that Professor Despres has nothing to say about the role in the 1960's of the C.I.A. and private organizations like the Christian Anti-Communist Crusade, and only an obscure footnote reference to the American Institute for Free Labor Development (1969: 91).

Despres did acknowledge covert U.S. government intervention in Guyanese affairs during the early 1960's (1967:282), but he did not relate this intervention to the generation of intersectional conflict;

nor did he deal with the effect of British government policy upon intersectional relations throughout Guyanese history (see Bartels 1974: 73-78). The latter omission seems particularly serious in light of the stress in Furnivall and M.G. Smith's work on minority - (i.e., European) - control of intersectional relations in plural societies (see also Despres 1967: 19).

Section 4 - The Pluralism of Pierre van den Berghe

Pierre van den Berghe, like M.G. Smith and Leo Despres, defined pluralism in terms of institutional differences.

> Societies are pluralistic insofar as they are segmented into corporate groups that frequently, although not necessarily, have different cultures or subcultures and insofar as their social structure is compartmentalized into analogous, parallel, non-complementary but distinguishable sets of institutions (1967: 34).

Van den Berghe did not see minority regulations of intersectional relations by threat or use of force as a defining characteristic of pluralism, but claimed that in plural societies there is "relative importance of coercion and economic interdependence as bases of social integration" (1967: 35).

Van den Berghe argued that segmentation and stratification of a society along 'racial' lines constituted a special case of pluralism, and distinguished between cultural pluralism, which results from the presence in a given society of several ethnic groups or cultural traditions, and social pluralism, which is present when a society is "structurally compartmentalized into analogous and duplicatory but culturally alike sets of institutions" (1967: 35). Later he adds:

> Cultural pluralism between ethnic groups cannot exist without institutional duplication and hence without social pluralism; that is, any form of cultural pluralism has a

> structural facet which can be treated as social pluralism. But when, in addition to ethnicity, race is introduced as a criterion of group membership, a new dimension is added to social pluralism. Race is not the structural counterpart of ethnic heterogeneity, but is an independent criterion according to which a society is segmented. Since race is a more rigid basis of cleavage than ethnicity, social pluralism can subsist longer and, indeed, even in the nearly total absence of cultural pluralism, whereas the converse is not true (1967: 135).

Presumably, this means that a subordinated group can adopt the cultural values of a dominant group, but still be excluded from admission to the institutional system of the dominant group on the basis of 'race'. In such a case, the subordinated group would be forced to maintain a separate institutional system.

Van den Berghe also distinguished between "paternalistic" race relations in preindustrial, agricultural societies, in which "the dominant group, often a small minority....rationalizes its rule in an ideology of benevolent despotism and regards members of the subordinate group as....inferior", and "competitive" race relations in industrialized and urbanized societies, in which the dominant group is frequently a majority, racial membership remains ascribed, but class differences become more salient relative to caste

> ....there is acute competition between the subordinate caste and the working class within the dominant group (1967: 27-30).
>
> The existing degree of conflict is one of the basic dimensions in which the paternalistic type of race relations differs from the competitive one and the instability and change typical of the competitive type result in large measure from the dialectic of conflict between subordinate and dominant groups (1967: 36).

This apparently means that minority - i.e., European - domination in plural societies often generates opposition through the operation of the ideological and economic processes that are necessary for its

maintenance. European economic exploitation creates a working class which comes to oppose minority rule with the ideological weapons of libertarianism, democracy, and egalitarianism which are gleaned from European ideologies. Van den Bergh suggests that a dialectical approach can best characterize such an "internally generated process of conflict and contradiction between opposites" (1964: 16-17).

Although Van den Berghe does not address himself specifically to the question of the origin of plural divisions, all of his case studies concern societies which were characterized by European colonial expansion and political and economic domination by European minorities. Bernard Magubane has noted a tendency among North American and British social scientists (including Van den Berghe) to attribute inter-ethnic conflict to the presence of "primordial identities" or "plural differences", rather than to the role that European colonists and governments played in promoting such divisions for their own ends (Magubane 1971: 440). While Van den Berghe vehemently denied Magubane's charge and claimed that he had always advocated "cross-temporal" studies of race relations in African nations that take exploitation by European minorities into account (1970: 682-684), proponents of pluralist theory (including Van den Berghe) have not explicitly addressed themselves to a detailed examination of the historical role of European minorities and governments in promoting strife or in maintaining distinctions between plural sections.

Van den Berghe points out that competitive race relations can be characterized by a "dialectic of conflict" between subordinated and dominant groups. While Van den Berghe's emphasis on the 'dialectical' generation of mass opposition by subordinated groups as a result of European oppression seems useful, it is absent in the work of other pluralist thinkers. At the same time, consistent use of a dialectical

approach raises the question of whether or not such mass opposition generates an opposing tendency - viz., conflict between subordinated sections as a result of 'divide-and-rule' policies of European colonial governments and entrepreneurs.* It seems that Van den Berghe did not take this possibility into account, although it has been a prominent factor in the social processes of several plural societies, including Guyana (Post 1969: 90-92): Bartels 1974: 76-78).

More recently Van den Berghe has suggested that the "....fundamental problem of maintaining unity of the plural society.... consists in reaching a modus vivendi between the ruling elite....and the subordinated ethnic elites of its constituent ethnic groups" (1975: 156-157). These subordinated ethnic elites, Van den Berghe claims, typically constitute "the would-be ruling classes of the subordinated ethnic groups, were they to achieve political independence" (1975: 156). Van den Berghe then discusses various ways in which ruling elites have coped with this problem, and concludes that:

> Whatever the policies of the colonial power (or ruling elite), the secret of longevity of multi-ethnic empires (or states), is to prevent the rise of elites that see their interest more in ethnic than in class terms. Such potential nationalist leaders must either be wiped out or be sufficiently rewarded and co-opted to identify with their fellow class exploiters from the dominant ethnic groups (1975: 158-159).

This analysis completely omits the possibility that nationalist or ethnic leaders may not be part of a "would-be ruling class". Instead, such leaders may be committed to socialism - i.e., abolition of class exploitation. In this case, cooperation between subordinated ethnic groups in struggles against colonial or neo-colonial exploitation may be based upon an ideology which combines the goals of socialism and national

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* Milton Gordon, who also writes from a pluralist point of view, does not treat this problem in the context of U.S. society (1964).

liberation. The rise of the PPP and the success of several contemporary national liberation movements were based upon these elements. Unfortunately, Van den Berghe's approach cannot account for such cases.

Section 5 - The Approach of Psychological Anthropology

Psychological anthropologists have also attempted to account for inter-ethnic conflict in Guyana. Phillip Singer based his approach to inter-ethnic relations in Guyana on the concept of the "Hindu personality".

> For Hsu, the key to an understanding of Hindu personality in India is in the "supernatural-centered orientation of life....". On the basis of brief field work in Guyana, I believe this orientation applied to the Hindu there as well. This orientation, says Hsu, leads the Hindu "....to seek solutions to his life's problems by leaving himself in the hands of gods or persons who, compared with him, enjoy higher statuses or possess greater powers". This attitude encourages attitudes of dependency and submission to authority. There is also a "lack of close human relations". Furthermore, the "dominant mother-son relationship is conducive to diffused unilateral dependence". It means that the individual need feel no resentment against being a recipient, nor need he feel obligated to reciprocate what he has received. This "diffused outlook" will inevitably be correlated with a strong feeling of mutual uncertainty and even distrust among men (1967: 105-106).

Singer argued, in light of the alleged existence of the Hindu personality, that the violent clashes between Indo- and Afro-Guyanese that occurred during the 1960's constituted a "classic case of communalism" (1967: 112). He followed Dumont in defining "communalism" as the "affirmation of the religious community as a political group" (1967: 112). If Singer's interpretation of strife in Guyana is correct, it is difficult to see why most Indo-Guyanese Hindus who owned large businesses sided with the faction composed mainly of Afro-Guyanese, viz., Forbes Burnham's Peoples National Congress (PNC). And it is also difficult to understand how large numbers of working class Indo- and Afro-Guyanese cooperated

successfully during the formation of the PPP. The concepts of the "Hindu personality" and communalism cannot account for instances of class struggle in which Hindus cooperated with non-Hindus.

One can also ask whether or not personality (in this case, "Hindu personality") is affected in any way by class or social structure. While other social scientists working in the context of psychological anthropology have investigated this question (see, for example, the selections in Cohen (1961), Singer apparently has not.

Finally, despite Singer's dismissal of the views of those who see Guyanese social history in terms of "competition for riches and political power, or Colonial Office manipulation, or the behind-the-scenes manipulation by foreign investors" (1967: 112), there can be little doubt that these factors deeply affected the development and practice of Hinduism in Guyana, particularly the breakdown of the caste system(Smith, R.T. and Jayawardena 1967: 52; Adamson 1972). These factors also affected relations between subordinated ethnic groups. At this point in history, the role of the U.S. and British governments in promoting political and ethnic conflict in the early 1960's is beyond question (Radosh 1969; Henfrey 1972; R.T. Smith 1971: 426; Walton 1972). Singer's attribution of this conflict to a single factor - viz., personality - seems highly dubious in light of what is now known of U.S. and British government involvement in Guyana during the 1960's. This example is symptomatic of Singer's failure to deal with the role of entrepreneurs and the colonial government in promoting ethnic division and conflict throughout Guyana's colonial history. A later treatment of inter-ethnic conflict by the psychological anthropologist George Devos also failed to take these factors into account (Devos 1972).

Section 6 - The Cultural-Ecological Approach

Recently, Despres and others have adopted a 'cultural-ecological approach to inter-ethnic relations in Guyanese society. Following Alland (1967) and others (Mayr 1963; Vayda and Rappaport 1968; Wolpoff 1968), Despres characterized adaptation as "....a temporal process in terms of which transgenerational changes in behavioral codes are diverted by selective environmental forces. The sum effect of these changes is cultural evolution." The adaptations to limited physical resources exhibited by various ethnic sections in Guyana were characterized as instances of "micro-cultural" evolution. Despres divided Guyana's coastal strip into three types of environment: "plantation", "village", and "urban" and attempted to explain why Indo-Guyanese predominate in village and plantation environments and occupations, while Afro-Guyanese predominate in urban environments and occupations (1969: 282). In order to do this, Despres assumed that Guyana's "physical resources" - e.g., land and jobs - are limited, and then attempted to apply Gauss' competitive exclusion principle - viz., "whenever two species - culturally differentiated populations - are in competition for the same resources, one of three alternative resolutions is possible: (a) one population may migrate (leave the country); (b) one or both populations may become culturally extinct; or (c) one or both populations may re-adapt their cultural system" (1969: 41-42).

Despres concluded that alternative (c) occurred in Guyana; the differential adaptations of Indo- and Afro-Guyanese contribute to the existence of cultural pluralism in Guyana, and have the effect of reducing competition for limited physical resources between plural sections. Ehrlich, using a similar approach, argues that:

> ....communities organized around modified Indian culture patterns failed to develop in Jamaica as they did in some other areas (Trinidad and Guyana) because of historical and cultural ecological factors during the post-emancipation period in the British Caribbean (1971: 167).

The method of cultural ecology, as developed by Despres, represents an advance over previous attempts to 'explain' differential adaptation in terms of 'racial' characteristics (see, for example, Swan 1957: 53-54). Despres' notion of the 'environment' to which Indo- and Afro-Guyanese adapted included the notion of scarcity of employment opportunities and agricultural land; and Despres did not specify whether or not he regarded this scarcity as beyond human manipulation (i.e., as 'natural'), or as artificially created by the exigencies of the productive relations imposed by colonization and/or absentee owners and directors. This omission is important, since such scarcity can, in some cases, be partially or totally relieved by the concerted action of subordinated populations (e.g., in land reform movements, revolutions, etc.). To use Despres' terminology, if the working class is treated as a 'species' (i.e., as "culturally differentiated" from the ruling class), and if the working class is composed of "culturally differentiated" subspecies (i.e., ethnic groups), then one of its alternatives in 'adapting' to a scarcity of resources is for its constituent ethnic sections to act collectively in order to change the exploitative social relations that perpetuate scarcity of resources - i.e., subordinated ethnic groups can cooperate in political and/or revolutionary struggles against the ruling class. The efforts of Indo- and Afro-Guyanese squatters in 1973, which culminated in the distribution of foreign-owned residential land among landless Indo- and Afro-Guyanese workers and farmers, is a case in point. This alternative for 'adapting to scarce resources' is not treated by Despres.

Despres' first application of a cultural-ecological perspective to ethnicity in Guyana emphasized the central role played by competition for scarce resources in maintenance of ethnic boundaries. In a more recent work, Despres attributed the origin and continuity of such scarcity to exploitation by European and North American entrepreneurs.

> .....Guyana has an economy encapsulated within the sphere of European, Canadian, and American domination. Its core industries are foreign-owned and controlled and they leave only a marginal share of the country's material resources unexpropriated and available to Guyanese. The whites who manage these industries are a group apart from the rest of the Guyanese .... Over the years, the competitive allocation of Guyana's unexpropriated resources has served to order categorically identified elements of the Guyanese population in an arrangement of unequal status and power (1975: 99).

> .....since early in the seventeenth century, competition for resources in Guyana has served to order a system of inequality in terms of which categorically differentiated populations have been joined in competitive opposition (1975: 109-110).

The result of this "competitive opposition" was a "differential adaptation" of various subordinated ethnic groups to the "environmental resources" not expropriated by foreign entrepreneurs. Afro-Guyanese became dominant in urban, industrial, and government occupations, while Indo-Guyanese became dominant in rural, agricultural occupations.

One of Despres' main conclusions is that this "differential adaptation" of ethnic populations in allocation of marginal environmental resources controlled by Europeans and North Americans, e.g., land, minerals, employment opportunities, and markets (1975: 91), has served to reduce inter-ethnic competition. The fact that Afro-Guyanese were forced by European policy to exploit urban environmental resources (1975: 92) while Indo-Guyanese were allowed to exploit rural environmental resources ultimately reduced the possibility of resource competition and conflict between them.

This model of inter-ethnic relations in Guyana represents an advance over other models insofar as it relates economic scarcity among subordinated ethnic groups to economic exploitation by European, Canadian and American entrepreneurs. Nevertheless, this model fails to explain instances of cooperation between Portuguese, Afro-Guyanese, and Indo-Guyanese workers in political and industrial action aimed at relieving or ameliorating economic scarcity. This sort of cooperation could also be defined as an "adaptation" (in Despres' sense) to economic scarcity. Only a class perspective can explain various instances of cooperation between subordinated ethnic populations in struggles against major entrepreneurs and the colonial government. Similarly, only a class perspective can account for the fact that the wealthiest Portuguese and East Indian entrepreneurs broke ethnic ranks and aligned themselves with foreign entrepreneurs and the colonial government during the PPP attempt to gain political power in the early 1950's. Given the notion of competitively-aligned ethnic blocs implicit in Despres' model, such behavior is inexplicable.

From a class perspective, differential adaptation of subordinated ethnic populations to environmental resources controlled by European and North Americans is <u>not</u> seen as functionally serving to reduce inter-ethnic competition. Rather, differential allocation of economic resources by entrepreneurs and the colonial government promoted socio-economic inequalities between subordinated ethnic groups. When members of these groups 'explained' these inequalities in terms of ruling class racial stereotypes, or used ruling class racial stereotypes in attempts to strengthen their social and economic positions vis-à-vis each other, this inhibited inter-ethnic unity in political and industrial struggles against the ruling class.

In conclusion, we have seen that the non-class approaches to relations between subordinated ethnic groups in Guyanese colonial history treated so far do not take into account (1) instances of inter-ethnic unity in working class struggles against employers and the colonial government, or (2) ruling class policies of differential allocation which promoted competition for scarce resources and 'racial' animosity between subordinated ethnic groups. Only a model based upon the concepts of class and class interest can take these factors into account. In the next chapter, such a model will be outlined.

CHAPTER II

CLASS, ETHNICITY, AND IDEOLOGY IN BRITISH GUYANA

Introduction

In this chapter, a set of concepts for characterizing social processes in former British Guyana will be introduced. These include the concepts of social class, ideology, and ethnicity. These concepts will be articulated in a model aimed at explaining tendencies toward conflict and cooperation among Indo- and Afro-Guyanese workers which characterize the social history of British Guyana. In subsequent chapters, a detailed examination of significant instances of inter-ethnic conflict and cooperation will be undertaken in order to determine the extent to which this model actually accounts for intersectional relations in Guyanese social history.

Section 1 - Mode of Production

In Marxist social theory, the fundamental unit of analysis is the mode of production. Any group of people, in order to survive, must have at least some of its members engaged in material production. This involves the planning of production, the disposition, organization and use of the factors of production, and the allocation of goods produced. When these things are consistently done in a particular way, one can speak of a mode of production.* For example, in the 'primitive communal' mode of production, land, raw materials, and tools are equally accessible

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* In some cases, different modes of production can coexist. For example, it is speculated that in the Mediterranean area, communal agricultural settlements coexisted with slave production before the rise of slave empires (see Finlay 1972; Service 1975; Anderson 1974). When such a 'mixture' of modes of production exists, one mode of production usually becomes dominant in the sense that its requirements take priority over, and influence the development of the other(see Terray 1972).

to all. There is collective organization of labour and cooperation in production. Individuals do not engage in production in order to privately appropriate goods produced; rather, production is undertaken so that goods produced can be socially appropriated. Labour is free in the sense that it is not coerced, and can be withdrawn at almost any time. Insofar as kinship relations are fundamental to the organization of production and distribution of goods produced, kinship relations are an essential component of the 'primitive communal' mode of production.

While various theories of the origin of class society have been proposed (e.g., see Anderson 1974; Kirchoff 1968; Service 1972), most theorists agree that the fundamental difference between class societies and 'primitive communal' societies is that some portion of raw materials, land, tools, or labour (sometimes in the form of slaves) are 'appropriated' by a minority. Production is organized so that various amounts of the goods produced can also be appropriated by this minority. Labour is often unfree, and cannot be withdrawn without incurring sanctions.

The ruling class invariably explains and justifies this social order with a set of ideas (an ideology) that are often accepted, in varying degrees, by the exploited classes. However, the exploitative nature of class society sometimes engenders economic crises, or promotes conflict between exploiting and exploited classes. In the course of such conflict, the exploited classes sometimes come to accept a counter-ideology which 'explains' and justifies the need for reform or overthrow of the existing social order. If the exploited classes seriously threaten the social order, they are restrained or suppressed by the threat or use of physical harm or confinement, carried out by institutions such as police forces, armies, judicial systems, penal systems, etc. The totality of such coercive institutions is known as the state. Yet the

existence of class society does not always depend upon constant repression by the state; social scientists have often pointed out that coercion, by itself, is often insufficient to maintain an exploitative social order over an extended period of time without repeated instances of resistance. Most often, an exploitative social order is maintained because the majority of its people accept, to some degree, the ideology of the exploiting class.

Improvement in the technology of production (i.e., the forces of production) has sometimes been regarded as the only factor which determines the transition from one mode of production to another. But this view fails to explain why improvements in the technology of production sometimes serve as necessary, but not sufficient conditions for changes in a mode of production. For example, it is doubtful that the slave mode of production in ancient Greece, Rome and the Near East would have been possible without the prior development of agriculture.

It seems that, rather than technological improvement being an independent variable that causes change, the emergence of a new, dominant class in the course of class struggle may sometimes allow the widespread adoption of new technology which requires a re-organization of production and brings improvements in productivity. These, in turn, may promote important changes in other aspects of society. Although these matters are crucial to an understanding of world historical development, they need not concern us here since social and economic processes in British Guyana occurred mainly within the context of a single mode of production - viz., capitalism.

Section 2 - Classes in Capitalist Society

Traditionally, Marxist social scientists have defined social class in capitalist society in terms of ownership (or non-ownership) of the means of commodity production. The bourgeoisie and petit bourgeoisie own, and derive income from, land, tools, or money, while the proletariat's sole source of income is the sale of labour-power to capitalists. By virtue of its ownership of the means of production, the bourgeoisie has at its disposal the labour of wage-earners, and is thus able to determine the type, amount, and disposition of commodities produced, and to appropriate surplus-value produced by proletarians. Members of the petit bourgeoisie own amounts of land or capital that are small in relation to the holdings of the bourgeoisie, and hire less labour than bourgeois employers. Members of the petit bourgeoisie sometimes work on their farms or in their stores, hiring labour infrequently or not at all. Also, the bourgeoisie, in contrast to the petit bourgeoisie, is the major part of a ruling class insofar as it directly or indirectly controls state policy and power (e.g., the legislative system, executive branch of government, political parties, legal system, penal system, police, army, etc.), and the media for the dissemination of ideas (e.g., schools, newspapers, churches, etc.).

Marxist economic theory predicts periodic economic crises of capitalism which bring the working class into conflict with the bourgeoisie and their state apparatus. The roots of such crises can only be eliminated when the commanding heights of the economy - e.g., mines, major agricultural enterprises, factories, major retail outlets, financial institutions, transportation systems, etc. - are taken over and controlled by the working class. When this occurs, production and distribution can be planned, thus eliminating capitalist crises; surplus-

value can be allocated for elimination of poverty, inequality, unemployment, and other social problems, and scientific methods can be applied to all spheres of production. This transformation usually involves revolution, led by a political party of the working class, guided by Marxist-Leninist theory (see Ryerson 1951; Burns 1962; Huberman 1961; Sweezy 1964).

Marxists claim that some of the key factors which made the European industrial revolution possible were European capitalists' access to cheap labour, cheap raw materials, and protected markets in European colonies. Industrialization generally raised living standards for the North American and European working classes, despite recurrent economic crises and continued exploitation of labour by capital. Workers in some of the advanced capitalist nations achieved a modicum of political and economic power through the organization of trade unions, political parties, and cooperatives, while workers in colonies or neo-colonies remained impoverished. They were prevented from achieving any significant degree of political or economic power by the policies and practices of corporations and governments in the advanced capitalist nations. Large parts of Asia, Africa, and Latin America remain economically backward because wealth is drained off by corporations in the advanced capitalist nations (see Lenin 1970; Baran 1957; Frank 1969; Woddis 1967). After World War II, movements for national liberation and socialism succeeded in some nations of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, despite overt and covert attempts by corporations and governments in advanced capitalist nations to preserve colonial and neo-colonial relationships. In most cases, various sorts of aid from the socialist countries were key factors in the successes of national liberation movements (see Burchett 1968 and 1970; Green 1971; Davidson 1969 and 1975; Hinton 1970; Barnet 1972 and

1973).

Section 3 - Social Classes in British Guyana

The capitalist class in British Guyana owned the major means of production and exchange, appropriated surplus-value produced by slaves* and/or wage-earners, usually controlled state policy, and usually had a monopoly on the legal use of state-power. By virtue of its ownership of the means of production, the capitalist class had at its disposal the labour of the slaves and the labour-power of wage-earners, and was thus able to determine the type, amount, and disposition of most goods produced. While other social classes also emerged (e.g., a petit bourgeoisie composed of merchants and farmers), the main social classes throughout Guyanese colonial history were the owners of the major means of production (usually the Dutch or British owners of sugar, coffee, or cotton plantations), slaves, and later, wage-earners. The planters had at their disposal the profits realized by sale in Europe of the commodities produced by the slaves or wage-earners.

The capitalists, however, did not constitute a monolithic group which unanimously dictated state policy and the use of state-power. Within the capitalist class the interests of wealthy merchants and planters sometimes diverged. Furthermore, colonial administrators had a large voice in the formulation of state policy; and while their use of state-power often reflected the interests of the planters, there were

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* While British Guyana, from European colonization until 1834, was a slave society, it differed from the classical slave societies of Greece and Rome. In the latter, most goods were produced on large, privately-owned agricultural estates, and were used or consumed where they were produced. In British Guyana, most slaves produced commodities for sale in Europe. In this sense, slave production in British Guyana and most of the Caribbean was an appendage of European capitalism.

occasional conflicts between them. Together, these three groups - i.e., planters, wealthy merchants, and colonial administrators - determined state policy and the use of state-power. They shall be referred to as the Guyanese ruling class.

In the latter part of the seventeenth century, various Dutch West India Company governors unsuccessfully attempted to prohibit the enslavement of Amerindians by planters. Planters were reluctant to give up their Amerindian slaves because Amerindians made up a relatively large proportion of the plantation labour force. For example, in 1691, the Dutch West India Company plantation at Kyk-over-al had 48 Amerindian slaves and 185 African slaves (Rodway 1891: 48). By the early eighteenth century, however, Amerindian slavery had almost disappeared, and Amerindian groups were often paid by planters and the colonial government to kill or capture runaway African slaves and to suppress slave uprisings (De Villiers 1911: 19; Menzies 1974; Schomburgk 1922: 53).

Full and final emancipation in 1838 saw the transformation of a large proportion of ex-slaves into small farmers who grew provisions for their own consumption and for sale on local markets. At first, many of these ex-slaves pooled their savings* to buy abandoned plantations, and farmed them cooperatively. When the planter-dominated colonial government adopted laws which made cooperative land tenure illegal, the cooperatives' lands were divided among their members. Thus, these ex-cooperative members became a petit bourgeoisie insofar as they owned and worked amounts of land that were relatively small in comparison to the

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* During the slave period, and during the apprenticeship period (the four-year period between 1834 and 1838 when formally emancipated slaves were compelled to continue part-time work for their masters), some slaves were able to accumulate savings by methods that will be described in later chapters.

vast holdings of the plantation owners. Unlike the planters, the Afro-Guyanese farmers worked on the land that they owned, and did not usually hire labour. Their incomes were usually comparable to those of most unskilled plantation labourers, and the necessity to raise money for property taxes often compelled them to seek part-time work on the large plantations. The descendants of the Afro-Guyanese cooperative farmers still own and work the land of the post-emancipation cooperatives in several villages of East Coast Demerara. They retain most of the characteristics noted above with the added feature of dependence upon the large sugar estates for fertilizers, tractors, and, in some cases, markets for the canes that they grow. While the sugar estates were owned by Bookers, Afro-Guyanese farmers often complained of low prices for canes, and high prices for fertilizer and tractor rentals. Since the nationalization of sugar estates, this situation may have changed.

In spite of the fact that farmers could buy and sell their land, a group of Afro-Guyanese farmers with large holdings never developed. While this can be attributed to 'cultural' factors (e.g., the desire of Afro-Guyanese villagers not to appear more wealthy than their neighbours - see R.T. Smith 1964: 312), it is more likely a result of colonial policy. Colonial government policies excluded most Afro-Guyanese farmers from the cultivation of rice (see Chapter IV), the one cash crop which, at various times in Guyanese colonial history, allowed small farmers to prosper and increase their holdings.

A group of Afro-Guyanese and Coloured hucksters had emerged during the slave and apprenticeship periods, and was supplemented by the emergence of a group of Afro-Guyanese shopkeepers after full and final emancipation. Unlike the Portuguese and East Indian retail merchants who, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, acquired chains of stores, hired

labour, engaged in the import-export business, and made large profits, Afro-Guyanese shopkeepers were unable to expand. Their incomes were often no larger than those of unskilled wage-labourers, and this was still the case in 1973. Again, as with Afro-Guyanese farmers, absence of a class of wealthy Afro-Guyanese merchants was a direct result of planter and colonial government policy which favoured the development of Portuguese and Indo-Guyanese businesses (see Chapter IV).

The latter half of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth saw the emergence of a class of Afro-Guyanese wage-earners who mined gold, diamonds, and bauxite in Guyana's interior. In Georgetown, Guyana's capital city, Afro-Guyanese dock workers, railway-men, and street car workers formed Guyana's first trade unions. These unions often received support from a newly-emerging group of educated Afro-Guyanese and Coloured professionals, minor government employees, teachers, and clerical employees of major firms.

After full and final emancipation in 1838, planters replaced their slaves with indentured labourers from China, Madeira, East India, Africa and other parts of the British West Indies (Nath 1969: 219). Many members of these groups, along with many ex-slaves, formed the class of plantation wage-earners.

In the late nineteenth century, planters and the colonial government began offering land for rice cultivation to East Indians in lieu of return passage to India (as stipulated by their indenture contracts), and an East Indian petit bourgeoisie, composed mainly of rice farmers, developed. This group expanded greatly during World Wars I and II because of the necessity of replacing the supply of rice from the Far East. Expansion continued during the 1950's when Guyana's first popularly-

elected government, formed by the PPP, pursued policies which encouraged the rice industry (Hanley 1975).

While rice farming allowed some Indo-Guyanese to become wealthy, others, as well as some Chinese and Portuguese, became wealthy merchants. Some Indo-Guyanese indentured labourers were able to accumulate savings by performing Hindu ceremonies as pandits, cutting hair, huckstering, or by providing other services for Indo-Guyanese indentured labourers. Others acquired small numbers of cattle, or became translators or foremen on plantations. Some Indo-Guyanese used savings derived from these activities to establish small shops when their indenture periods expired.

Section 4 - Class and Stratum in British Guiana

Rodolfo Stavenhagen claims that social class is the dynamic part of a social formation, while stratifications (e.g., rankings in terms of income, colour, education, occupation, or other criteria) are more "inert" phenomena, often reflecting earlier class formations.

> ...stratification systems acquire an inertia of their own which acts to maintain them, although the conditions that gave rise to them may have changed. As class relationships are modified by the dynamics of class opposition, conflict and struggle, stratification systems tend to turn into "fossils" of the class relations on which they were originally based (1975: 33-34; see also Lenin 1976: 122).

While Stavenhagen's attempt to relate social class to stratification seems useful, the relationship between class and stratum in British Guiana (as in modern Guyana) did not, except in the case of colour stratification, involve criteria of stratification that were "fossilized" remains of an earlier class structure. In British Guiana the planter/merchant class, by virtue of its control of the means of production, exchange, political power, and ideology, had more access to income,

education (e.g., the literacy necessary for non-manual labour), and technical knowledge (e.g., improvements in the technology of sugar production) than the labouring classes and petit bourgeoisie. It is, therefore, not surprising that the Guyanese stratification system was based upon these factors - viz., those closest to the ruling class in terms of power, property, income, education, and technical knowledge or skill formed the highest strata of the labouring classes. Possession of a large amount of property, income, or technical skill was a key factor in one's ability to survive recurrent economic crises. In the past, this scale had an added dimension of colour - viz., the lighter one's skin, the higher one's stratum. This was, as Stavenhagen suggests, based upon the class relations that existed during the slave period. Colour, however, may be disappearing as a criterion for stratification in Guyana

Strictly speaking, the Afro-Guyanese and Coloured government employees (e.g., clerks, accountants, and teachers) and clerical employees of major firms (e.g., clerks and accountants) belonged to the working class insofar as their sole source of income was the sale of labour-power for wages. Yet these groups were distinguished from most unskilled workers in terms of income, education, and occupational skills. While most unskilled agricultural or urban workers were illiterate, the Afro-Guyanese and Coloured government employees, clerical employees of major firms, and professionals (e.g., lawyers) were not, and their jobs provided steady, relatively high incomes in contrast to the seasonal, fluctuating wages of most unskilled workers. These groups shall be referred to as the Afro-Guyanese 'middle class'.

On the plantations, Afro-Guyanese sugar boilers, mechanics, and transient cane-cutting gangs received higher wages than most unskilled

labourers. The refining of the juice extracted from sugar cane required various stages of 'boiling'. If this boiling continued for too long, or was ended too quickly, the value of the sugar was decreased. The ability to judge the progress of boiling by the appearance and texture of the sugar was a skill that was highly developed by Guyanese sugar boilers. Their wages were high and their services were sought throughout the British West Indies. Afro-Guyanese cane-cutting gangs were unskilled, but known for strength, endurance, and productivity. The most productive gangs travelled from plantation to plantation during the seasons when cane was harvested and refined (the 'grinding season'), and received relatively high wages. While mechanics, sugar boilers, and cane-cutting gangs often received higher wages than most plantation workers, they usually lacked the education of members of the Afro-Guyanese middle class. It is significant that Indo-Guyanese, who made up the bulk of plantation labourers, were seldom allowed or encouraged to become mechanics or sugar boilers by the planters.

Patterns of stratification among Indo-Guyanese differed from those of Afro-Guyanese, mainly because of the differences in economic opportunities made available to each group by the ruling class. Increases in rice prices during World Wars I and II allowed some small rice farmers to accumulate land and savings, and to purchase equipment for rice milling. It is difficult to establish definite criteria in terms of ownership of land, wealth, draught animals, farm machinery, etc. to distinguish 'large' rice farmers from 'small' rice farmers. However, while small rice farmers usually had no more than five acres of land, cultivated by family labour (see O'Loughlin 1958), large rice farmers usually owned several times as much land, and received several times the income of small rice

farmers. While large farmers often hired labour on a full or part-time basis, or rented their land to other farmers, small farmers seldom did. A few of the largest Indo-Guyanese farmers accumulated thousands of acres, and made their land available for cultivation by tenant farmers. This situation still exists in Essequibo.

Most Indo-Guyanese shopkeepers and hucksters were relatively poor. Their incomes were seldom higher than the incomes of unskilled plantation labourers, and this was still the case in 1973. However, some merchants, whose businesses prospered, were able to expand their operations into retail chains. A few wealthy merchants expanded further into productive enterprises such as timbering, baking, and auto repair. As we shall see in Chapter IV, the businesses started by Afro-Guyanese and Coloured during the emancipation period were ruined by the planters.

Education and the professions became a means of sustaining upward social mobility for the sons of wealthy Indo-Guyanese farmers and merchants. Yet until the 1950's, most schools were operated by Christian denominations, and closed to non-Christians. In order to attend, Indo-Guyanese students had to convert from Islam or Hinduism to Christianity. And unless Indo-Guyanese students remained Christian, they could not be hired as teachers. At the same time, teaching posts in elementary schools, as well as minor civil service jobs, were monopolized by Afro-Guyanese. These factors channelled educated Indo-Guyanese into the professions, and many of them became doctors or lawyers. Until recently, relatively few became teachers or civil servants.

In summary, Indo-Guyanese strata consisted of (1) wealthy merchants, businessmen, and farmers; (2) professionals; (3) small farmers and shopkeepers; and (4) plantation labourers. While the wealth and power of

large merchants, business, and farmers was considerable, especially in relation to other strata of Indo- and Afro-Guyanese, none of them were 'admitted' to the ruling class until the 1950's. Indo-Guyanese professionals, who shall be referred to as the Indo-Guyanese 'middle class', were distinguished by their possession of education and a steady income. Small farmers and shopkeepers often had no more education or income than unskilled Indo-Guyanese plantation labourers.

Throughout the course of the developments outlined above, Guyana's ruling class was also transformed. Individual resident ownership of plantations gave way to corporate, absentee ownership to such an extent that by 1920, almost all of Guyana's sugar plantations and sugar refineries were owned by the London-based firm of Booker Brothers and McConnell (see Tables I and II).

The ability of the ruling class to control state policy and power, and its need to ally itself with elements of subordinated classes in the face of working class opposition, varied greatly in different historical situations. By the mid-twentieth century, wealthy Portuguese and East Indians had some access to ruling class organs of power such as the Chamber of Commerce.

TABLE I

Concentration of Ownership and Control of Sugar Estates, 1872 and 1884

	1872			1884		
	Ownership	Control Through Mortgage	Total	Ownership	Control Through Mortgage	Total
Absentees: Major firms and Individuals						
Colonial Co.	12.30	1.80	14.10	11.40		11.40
Thos.Daniel & Sons	7.50	2.20	9.70	3.90		3.90
Charles McGarel, Q.Hogg & Bosanquet, Curtis & Co.	5.60	1.30	6.90			
Quintin Hogg(1882) only				8.10	4.90	13.00
James Ewing & Co.	4.10	1.10	5.20	3.50	0.70	4.20
Booker Bros. & J. McConnell	3.50	0.60	4.10	3.25	0.80	4.05
Sandbach,Parker & Co.	3.40	0.10	3.50	6.00	0.60	6.60
Geo.Little & Co.				2.60	1.50	4.10
Total Major Absentees	36.40	7.10	43.50	38.75	8.50	47.25
Other Absentees	28.60	5.60	34.20	33.65	2.60	36.25
Total Absentees	65.00	12.70	77.70	72.40	11.10	83.50
Residents mortgaged to other residents		12.30	12.30		7.10	7.10
Residents unmortgaged	10.00		10.00	9.40		9.40
Total	75.00	25.00	100.00	81.80	18.20	100.00

TABLE I - Concentration of Ownership and Control of Sugar Estates, 1872 and 1884 (Continued)

Sources: Each estate is weighted for productivity by its resident population as shown in the census of 1871 (for 1872), and the resident immigrant population return (for 1884) in C.O.115/59, pp.2742-45*. The identification of ownership and mortgage transports has been derived from the published notices of the colonial registrar's office in the Official Gazette, C.O.115. Ownership of all but three estates for 1872 and two for 1884 was ascertained. The record of mortgages is less accurate than that of ownership since notices of estate sales did not invariably indicate whether mortgages previously granted were still outstanding.

(Source: Adamson 1972: 205)

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* This notation refers to a Colonial Office file. Citations from Colonial Office files refer to the original reports and other documents, including minutes of colonial assemblies sent from the colonies to the Colonial Office. The numbers refer to the Colonial Office files deposited in the Public Record Office archives in Kew Gardens, London, U.K.

TABLE II

Ownership and Control of Sugar Estates, 1904

Direct Ownership	Percent Ownership	Control Through Ownership and Town Agency	Percent Control
Booker Bros., McConnel & Co.	17.20	Booker Bros., McConnel & Co.	27.00
Curtis, Campbell, & Co.	14.90	Curtis, Campbell, & Co.	17.85
New Colonial Co.	14.70	New Colonial Co.	16.15
Sandbach, Parker & Co.	11.10	Sandbach, Parker, & Co.	11.10
S. Davson & Co.	6.30	S. Davson & Co.	6.40
Ewings Estates Co.	5.80		
TOTAL LARGE FIRMS	70.00	TOTAL LARGE TOWN AGENTS	78.50
BALANCE	30.00		
TOTAL	100.00		
		Resident syndicates	
		B.H.Jones & S.H. Culpeper	9.25
		Richter & Weiting	4.60
		De Jonge & Smith	3.60
		TOTAL, RESIDENT SYNDICATES	17.45
		BALANCE	4.04
		TOTAL	100.00

Note: Ewings Estates were subject to the town agency of Bookers and are therefore included as part of the Bookers empire in the right-hand column.

Sources: British Guiana Almanack and Directory, 1904; C.O. 111/537, Swettenham to Chamberlain, No. 272, 14 July, 1903, app.F

(Source: Adamson 1972: 212)

Section 5 - Ruling Class Ideology in British Guiana

Dolbeare and Dolbeare define 'ideology' as a system of beliefs which,

> .....when integrated into a more or less coherent picture of (1) how the present social, economic, and political order operates, (2) why this is so, and whether this is good or bad, and (3) what should be done about it, if anything (1971: 3).

Similarly, Nigel Harris has defined the beliefs and ideas used by people to explain their position in the social order, and to justify their role in political and economic struggles, as ideology (1971: 43-44). In Chapter I, it was pointed out that Guyanese colonial history had many instances where members of different subordinated ethnic groups in the working class acted in concert or consciously cooperated in political and economic struggles against the ruling class. In these struggles, ruling class ideas of non-white inferiority were consistently used to justify existing power and property relations in the face of 'external' threats and actual or potential working class political and industrial action. Thus, according to the definitions mentioned above, ruling class notions of non-white inferiority constituted an ideology. Eric Williams (1945), Ashley Montagu (1945: 34-35), and others have shown that the growth of the racist ideology of white superiority and Black inferiority was linked to attempts by West Indian planters to justify slavery in the face of abolitionist opposition in the nineteenth century.

According to ruling class ideology in British Guiana, members of non-white ethnic groups were unfit to hold economic or political power by virtue of their alleged innate inferiority in intelligence, initiative, morality, etc. Physical features such as skin colour were thus linked with moral and intellectual qualities. At the same time, ruling class racist ideology allowed for distinctions between different non-white

ethnic groups. Many accounts by plantation owners, plantation managers, colonial officials, and Christian missionaries characterized East Indians as (1) industrious and hardworking; (2) thrifty to the point of greed; and (3) lacking in Christian morals (see Payne 1971: 67; Pearson 1897: 138-143; MacRae 1856: 9, 65). On the other hand Afro-Guyanese were often characterized as (1) physically strong, but lazy, carefree, irresponsible, financially improvident, and intellectually dim; (2) physically repulsive because of their facial features, skin colour, and hair type; and (3) child-like, trusting, and easily misled by more intelligent, unscrupulous people (Rodway 1895: 243; Pearson 1894: 243-249; Bellairs 1897: 288-289; Hudson cited in Moore 1975: 12; colonial officials cited in Payne 1971: 67).

The ruling class stereotypes noted above were not fixed and immutable throughout Guyanese colonial history. For example, the original ruling class stereotype of East Indians included reference to their alleged abilities as 'natural-born' cattle raisers (Pearson 1897). Later, when many ex-indentured labourers became rice cultivators, their alleged proclivity for animal husbandry was seldom mentioned in the writings of colonial officials, missionaries, and planters. The ruling class 'discovered' that East Indians had 'natural' abilities as rice farmers. These abilities were supposedly related to millennia of rice cultivation in India by the ancestors of Indo-Guyanese (Rodway 1895).

The notion that East Indians were 'natural' cattle raisers can be traced to the policies and practices of the ruling class. When East Indian indentured labourers began working on plantations, they were often prevented from cultivating provisions, buying land, or engaging in wage labour or huckstering off plantation land. They <u>were</u> permitted to

purchase and raise cattle. In light of this fact, it is not surprising that many East Indians devoted their savings and spare time to cattle raising, and that planters came to see them as 'natural-born' cattle raisers.

There were occasional differences between ruling class factions regarding policies toward subordinated ethnic groups. For example, when planters saw their interests threatened by colonial administrators who, under the influence of British public opinion, proposed measures to ameliorate conditions of indentured labourers, the planters would sometimes use their control of the colonial treasury to cut off government funding until the administrators dropped their proposals (Adamson 1972). In other cases, wholesale merchants agitated against the planters for increased wages and lower duties and prices in order to increase sales; at other times, the schemes of merchants for development of the non-sugar sectors of the economy (e.g., a railroad to the interior) were opposed by planters who wished to retain a monopoly of employment opportunities in order to keep wages low. Planters and the Colonial Government often resisted wage demands of Indo-Guyanese sugar workers, and opposed merchants who were willing to make some concessions to their Afro-Guyanese employees. The resulting wage differentials between Indo- and Afro-Guyanese workers promoted the growth of divisions within the working class.

In spite of conflict within the ruling class, it must be emphasized that stereotypes of Portuguese, Afro-Guyanese, and Indo-Guyanese (as outlined above) were shared by all elements of the ruling class. These stereotypes shaped policies of differential allocation insofar as they dictated that ethnic groups with differences in so-called "natural

proclivities" (as portrayed by these stereotypes) 'deserved' different treatment.

The racist ideology of the ruling class remained relatively unchanged until the 1950's. In the 1950's, the Guyanese ruling class had to meet the challenge of the PPP which had united many Afro- and Indo-Guyanese workers and farmers on the basis of appeals to class interests rather than 'racial' interests. At that point in Guyanese history, the traditional ruling class racist ideology of white superiority could no longer attract many Indo- or Afro-Guyanese to the side of the ruling class, and a new ideology was needed to attract support from elements in subordinated ethnic groups and classes to counter the PPP. Not surprisingly, in light of the escalation of CIA activities in Guyana at that time, anti-Communism fulfilled this function.

Section 6 - Ruling Class Racist Ideology and the Origin of Ethnic Boundaries

Despres has distinguished recent approaches to ethnicity according to whether or not they focus on institutional differences, as most pluralist approaches do, or upon self-ascription and ascription-by-others, that is, the ethnic boundaries discussed by Barth (1977: 127-129). The institutional approach to ethnicity in Guyana is questionable insofar as many Indo- and Afro-Guyanese share the same values and participate in the same institutions, yet maintain ethnic boundaries (see R.T. Smith 1971: 424). Barth's approach, in contrast, does not focus on institutions or the cultural patterns exhibited by various ethnic groups, but on the boundaries that define the groups - i.e., the cultural and/or physical features that are used as definitive characteristics of ethnicity by members of interacting ethnic groups (see Barth

1969: 13-14). This approach has the advantage of taking into account the possibility that criteria for self-ascription and ascription-by-others can change over time. It thus avoids the aura of permanence and immutability that can result from tying ethnic identity to a list of institutional forms. D.R. Aronson claims that

> Barth's mistake is to try to distinguish ethnicity on the grounds of primacy or priority ("basic") and breadth ("most general") when neither hierarchy nor total horizon can be fixed (1976: 11).

This seems to miss the main point of Barth's approach:

> When defined as an ascriptive and exclusive group, the continuity of ethnic units is clear; it depends on the maintenance of a boundary.....
>
> The critical focus of investigation.... become the boundary that defines the group, not the cultural stuff that it enclosed (Barth 1969: 14-15).

The latter point seems properly directed against those who attempt to define ethnic identity in terms of institutions, 'historical identity' (Schermerhorn 1970: 12), 'peoplehood' (Gordon 1964: 24), 'primordial identity' (Geertz 1963), etc. While the latter concepts seem quite abstract, Barth's notion of a boundary is concrete, and therefore, capable of generating empirical research. Contrary to Aronson's view, Barth's concept of a boundary need not divert attention from the fact that

> .....individuals maintain a multiplicity of identities which are often only SITUATIONALLY specified as relevant, let alone "basic" (1976: 11).

Aronson rejects definitions of ethnic identity proposed by Gordon, Cohen, and Schermerhorn on the grounds that they do "...not separate ethnic group behavior from other group behavior", and that they do not "...distinguish ETHNIC group consciousness from other

consciousnesses and identities" (1976: 11). In order to avoid these problems, Aronson defines ethnicity as a kind of ideology. Following Geertz, he characterizes ideologies as "images of social order" which concern

> (1) the goals or valued ends or resources to which society is said to be oriented, and (2) the categories of people who are acquiring or should acquire those values or resources (1976: 14).

Aronson goes on to claim that

> .....ethnicity is an ideology of and for value dissensus and disengagement from an inclusive socio-political arena, that is, for pursuing major values deemed not shared by others in the arena (1976: 14-15).

Aronson's view seems to mean that any group, in order to be 'ethnic', must have goals and values not shared by other groups - i.e., the values of its members are not "universalistic". Aronson claims, for example, that

> From an earlier concern with "integrating" into American society by moving up the class ladder once its barriers were removed, black people began to argue that they saw no reason to "integrate," and that although they wanted CLASS barriers removed, they wanted to pursue a set of values not shared by others in American society (1976: 15).

When one attempts to apply Aronson's scheme to Guyanese society, problems arise. As R.T. Smith has pointed out, many Afro- and Indo-Guyanese have similar values insofar as they aspire to a middle-class, "mid-Atlantic" lifestyle (1971: 424-425). In this sense, they would not be ethnic groups for Aronson because they do not exhibit "value dissensus". Consequently, this aspect of Aronson's concept of ethnic identity seems inappropriate for a treatment of Guyanese social processes. On the other hand, Aronson's concept of ethnic identities as ideologies seems useful. In this dissertation, it will be shown that ethnic boundaries which emerged in the Guyanese working class were based

upon the physical, moral, and intellectual qualities associated with different working class groups by ruling class racist ideology. It will also be shown that ethnic identities of Indo- and Afro-Guyanese, which were ultimately based upon ruling class racial stereotypes, were used to 'explain' and strengthen the relative social and economic positions of these groups. At the same time, the ruling class racial stereotypes which portrayed all non-whites as inferior, were consistently used by the ruling class in attempts to justify and defend the colonial social order. To this extent, the features of self-ascription and ascription-by-others which defined (and continue to define) ethnic boundaries in Guyana were ideologies in Aronson's sense.

The concept of ethnic identities as ideologies (following Aronson) involving boundaries (following Barth) will be used in this dissertation. It should be noted that at least some of the features of self-ascription and ascription-by-others in an ethnic boundary must involve something that one is born with and cannot acquire or change, such as skin colour, descent through a particular line, etc. That is, ethnic boundaries involve features of ascribed status. This requirement seems necessary in order to characterize the exclusiveness that ethnic identities in Guyana and elsewhere often involve.

In light of the previous discussion of ethnicity, we can approach Guyanese colonial history with several specific questions in mind:

(1) How did ethnic boundaries in Guyana originate?

(2) Why did certain physical and cultural criteria and not others emerge as definitive features of ethnic identities?

(3) How were ethnic boundaries maintained throughout the course of Guyanese colonial history?

It shall be shown in later chapters that answers to all of these questions involve reference to specific policies and practices of the ruling class, and ruling class racist ideology. Specifically, the ruling class treated Portuguese, Indo-Guyanese, and Afro-Guyanese differently. When economic and/or political benefits were extended to one group, they were often withheld from the other(s). This practice did not necessarily follow from a conscious attempt to 'divide-and-rule'. Rather, it resulted from differences in ruling class racial stereotypes of Indo-Guyanese, Portuguese, and Afro-Guyanese, and from differences in the interests of sections of the ruling class (i.e., merchants, planters, and colonial administrators). But no matter what the motivation behind ruling class policies, the effects were constant throughout Guyanese colonial history: differential allocation produced social and economic disparities between Indo-Guyanese, Portuguese, and Afro-Guyanese. And these disparities served as the basis for ethnic boundaries and conflict between these groups. Although there were instances of concerted action and conscious cooperation between Indo-Guyanese, Afro-Guyanese, and Portuguese workers in struggles against the ruling class, each group often used ruling class racial stereotypes in attempts to 'explain' and strengthen its social and economic position vis-à-vis the other(s). This use of ruling class racist ideology diverted attention from the actual cause of socio-economic inequalities between Indo-Guyanese, Afro-Guyanese, and Portuguese (viz., the ruling class practice of differential allocation), and inhibited concerted activity by workers and farmers in struggles against the ruling class.

Struggles between subordinated ethnic groups were seen by the ruling class as evidence that non-whites were "naturally" incapable of

governing themselves peaceably. A corollary of this ideological position was the belief, held by members of the ruling class, that they had a "responsibility" to continue exercising power in order to insure that such inter-ethnic struggles were held in check. In short, the ruling class policies of differential allocation and ruling class racist ideology served to "divide-and-rule". Yet in spite of these processes, conscious cooperation between workers from different subordinated ethnic groups in struggles against the ruling class gained momentum in the first half of the twentieth century (see Chase 1964; Spackman 1973; Jagan 1972).

The interplay between ruling class differential allocation, racist ideology, and cooperation between workers and farmers from subordinated ethnic groups in political and economic struggles against the ruling class continued until independence was achieved in 1966 (see Bartels 1974; Alan 1974). The inheritance of these factors in maintaining conflict still plagues contemporary Guyana.

Section 7 - The Ideologies of the Working Class and the Middle Classes

Marxist social scientists often distinguish between a 'class-in-itself' and a 'class-for-itself' in approaching the topic of class consciousness. The members of a class-in-itself do not perceive that they have common class interests; if they are members of an exploited class, they do not join together in struggle against the exploiting class. Acts of resistance are generally individual acts. In the case of a class-in-itself, the objective conditions which define a class exist (e.g., exploitation), but its members do not identify themselves in terms of common conditions and exploitation which can be collectively resisted.

In this sense, the subjective conditions for class-consciousness are absent. The members of a class-for-itself, on the other hand, identify themselves as members of a class with common interests; these interests may require organization, strikes, boycotts, or other forms of collective action. Members of a class-for-itself are class conscious by virtue of their common identity and interests.

A further distinction is often made between different types of working class consciousness. Reformist class consciousness involves the belief that economic scarcity suffered by members of an exploited class, originates from unfair treatment or exploitation by an exploiting or owning class. The plight of the exploited class can only be relieved by industrial and/or political organization and struggle against the exploiting class. This struggle, however, is <u>not</u> aimed at overthrowing the existing social order in order to create a new society without class exploitation. Rather, it is aimed at mitigating the worst effects of exploitation. A major variant of reformist class consciousness in capitalist society is trade union consciousness, where trade union organization and activity is aimed at mitigating the worst effects of exploitation rather than replacement of the existing social order. Revolutionary working class consciousness, on the other hand, traces economic scarcity among workers to ruling class oppression and exploitation. This oppression and exploitation can be permanently ended only when the labouring classes, led by a revolutionary political party, take over the commanding heights of the economy and wrest state-power from the ruling class. When a large number of members of the working class share revolutionary consciousness and act in concert, the working class becomes a conscious agent of social transformation.

Generally speaking, from approximately 1848 to the present time, there have been two major ideological tendencies within the Guyanese working class. On the one hand, there has been a tendency toward ruling class racist ideology. This ideology has been used by different ethnic groups in the working class to 'explain' their social and economic positions vis-a-vis each other, and to justify their role in competition with other working class ethnic groups for political and economic power. This use of ruling class racist ideology obscured the fact that economic groups in the working class resulted from ruling class policies of differential allocation rather than the 'racial' characteristics of Indo-Guyanese, Afro-Guyanese, and Portuguese; it also inhibited unity between different working class ethnic groups in political and economic struggles against the ruling class.

On the other hand, there has been a tendency toward working class reformist consciousness which has often expressed itself in working class political activity and trade union militancy, and which cut across 'racial' lines. This tendency had its basis in the fact that, beginning in the 1840's, Indo-Guyanese indentured labourers shared with most ex-slaves the experience of plantation labour - viz. long periods of exhausting labour, ill-treatment, poor food, and poor housing for little or no return. They also shared with Blacks and Coloureds the inferior status accorded to all non-whites in a society where all significant power was monopolized by a white ruling class, and where this social order was justified in terms of the assumption of the intellectual and cultural inferiority of all non-whites, irrespective of ethnic identity.

The rise of the PPP in the early 1950's brought revolutionary working class consciousness to a minority of Guyanese workers and

farmers, and the impact of their activities upon Guyanese society has been tremendous. However, they have never constituted a majority in the Guyanese labouring classes.

Guyanese workers and farmers exhibited varying combinations of ruling class racist ideology, reformist working class consciousness, and revolutionary working class consciousness at different periods in Guyanese colonial history. The factors which determined these variations are examined in the final section of this chapter. In the meantime, the different ideological postures within the working classes and middle classes of the major ethnic groups will be examined.

Afro-Guyanese workers and farmers sometimes 'explained' the success of Indo-Guyanese at rice farming and commerce in terms of the ruling class racial stereotype of Indo-Guyanese as 'greedy, clannish, heathens'. Ruling class racial stereotypes were also used to 'explain' instances where Indo-Guyanese workers broke solidarity in strikes. In contrast, Afro-Guyanese often saw themselves as strong, generous, Christian, and trusting. The latter view is quite possibly a transmutation of the ruling class racial stereotype of Blacks as physically strong, but lazy, carefree, lacking in initiative, childlike, easily misled, etc. At the same time, many Afro-Guyanese workers and farmers often saw themselves, as well as Indo-Guyanese workers and farmers, as victims of ruling class exploitation. They were usually willing to act in concert or consciously cooperate with Indo-Guyanese workers and farmers in trade union and political activities aimed at improving their political and economic conditions. During the rise of the PPP from approximately 1951 to 1955, most of them were willing to support the revolutionary aims of independence and socialism articulated by Afro-

and Indo- Guyanese PPP leaders. Thus, Afro-Guyanese workers and farmers often harboured a mixture of ruling class racist ideology and reformist working class consciousness. While relatively few of them understood Marxist-Leninist ideology of some PPP leaders, they followed the PPP during the early 1950's.

Members of the Afro-Guyanese and Coloured middle class were in an ambiguous position. On the one hand, they had achieved a modicum of success in the existing social order, and therefore had a stake in maintaining certain aspects of that social order. Insofar as their success often depended, to some extent, upon adoption of the culture of the ruling class, they were among the most 'Englishified' of all non-white Guyanese (see Chapter IV). On the other hand, their ambitious to achieve further social, economic, and political successes were often frustrated by racial barriers imposed by the ruling class. For example, top posts in the civil service were reserved for Englishmen, or whites of English descent, despite the presence of Afro-Guyanese and Coloured civil servants with sufficient experience and talent to fill them. Many members of the Afro-Guyanese and Coloured middle class wanted to rid Guyanese society of the racial barriers to their social, economic, and political advancement. Since the late 19th century, middle class Afro-Guyanese organizations had been calling for an end to racial discrimination. Some of Guyana's first trade union and working class political leaders came from the Afro-Guyanese middle class. Also, the Afro-Guyanese and coloured middle class supported the PPP's demand for independence in the early 1950's. It was believed that independence would remove the barriers to their advancement imposed by the ruling class.

At the same time, many members of the Afro-Guyanese and coloured

middle class accepted ruling class racial stereotypes of Indo-Guyanese, and saw the aspirations of Indo-Guyanese to civil service and professional occupations as a threat. In the early twentieth century, middle class Afro-Guyanese organizations were often extremely anti-Indian in character. In 1955, many middle class Afro-Guyanese left the PPP because they feared that an independent Guyana under an 'Indian' PPP government would dismantle and rebuild the state apparatus in such a way that Afro-Guyanese government employees would be replaced by Indo-Guyanese. These fears were played upon by the middle class Afro-Guyanese who came to lead the PNC. And the current mainstay of PNC support lies in the Afro-Guyanese and coloured middle class. The reasons why many Afro-Guyanese workers and farmers left the PPP and joined the PNC after 1955 will be treated in Chapter VII.

The ideology of Indo-Guyanese workers and farmers was similar to that of Afro-Guyanese workers and farmers - viz. a mixture of ruling class racist ideology, reformist working class consciousness, and revolutionary working class consciousness. Indo-Guyanese workers and farmers often 'explained' the success of Indo-Guyanese rice farmers and merchants in terms of transmutation of the ruling class racial stereotype of Indo-Guyanese as greedy and clannish. The latter qualities were reconstituted as thrift, industriousness, and initiative. Indo-Guyanese workers and farmers also generally accepted the derogatory ruling class racial stereotype of Afro-Guyanese, and used it to 'explain' the 'failures' of Afro-Guyanese in commerce and rice farming, and to 'explain' instances where Afro-Guyanese workers broke solidarity in strikes. As we shall see, however, differences in the social and economic conditions of Indo- and Afro-Guyanese resulted from ruling class policies of

differential allocation.

At the same time, many Indo-Guyanese workers and farmers saw themselves, as well as Afro-Guyanese workers and farmers, as victims of ruling class exploitation. They were usually willing to act in concert with Afro-Guyanese workers and farmers in trade union and political activities aimed at improving the lot of all workers and farmers, irrespective of 'race'. They supported the PPP's goals of independence and socialism during the early 1950's. The support of Indo-Guyanese workers and farmers for the PPP was, to a large extent, based upon the PPP's struggles on behalf of the working class for better rice prices, wages, working conditions, trade union recognition, etc. But many Indo-Guyanese workers and farmers also supported, and continue to support the PPP because most of its leaders and members are Indo-Guyanese. The effects of the recent PPP decision to give "critical support" to the predominantly Afro-Guyanese PNC government upon Indo-Guyanese who support the PPP because of 'race' are discussed in Chapter VIII.

The position of wealthy Indo-Guyanese merchants and farmers and the Indo-Guyanese was, in some respects, similar to the position of the Afro-Guyanese middle class. While its members had achieved success in colonial society, the racial barriers imposed by the ruling class prevented them from attaining the power and social status of 'white' colonial administrators, merchants and planters. Many members of the Indo-Guyanese middle class supported the PPP during the early 1950's because they believed that, in an independent Guyana, the barriers to their achievement of power and status commensurate with their wealth and/or occupations, would be removed. When it became clear that the PPP leadership was serious about achieving socialism as well as independence,

most wealthy merchants and farmers left the PPP in favour of the more moderate PNC, even though the latter was often seen as the 'African' party. They feared that a PPP government in an independent Guyana might nationalize or expropriate their businesses. They were often influenced by charges of the colonial government, the Chamber of Commerce, the PNC, major newspapers, etc. that the PPP was Communist, and therefore, posed a threat to private property.

Finally, there was a small number of white workers who mainly occupied clerical and minor managerial positions with the colonial government, Bookers, and other 'white'-owned businesses. Although, strictly speaking, their class interests were similar to those of non-white workers in similar occupations, they enjoyed all the advantages and perquisites of being white in a social order based upon the assumption of white superiority. Consequently, most of them identified themselves and their interests with the ruling class. A few, however, played a leading role in working class industrial and political struggles, the most notable of these being H.J.M. Hubbard.

Section 8 - The Model

Tendencies toward working class consciousness and class struggle co-existed with tendencies toward racist ideology and struggle between subordinated ethnic groups throughout Guyanese colonial history. When inter-ethnic conflict predominated, class struggle and working class consciousness never completely disappeared. And when class conflict and working class consciousness predominated, racist ideology and tension between subordinated ethnic groups never completely disappeared.

Both of the contradictory tendencies discussed above apparently had their origin in different ruling class policies. On the one hand,

the ruling class was compelled to maximize profits, especially during times of economic crisis, by imposing economic burdens, e.g., wage reductions, union busting, etc., more or less uniformly on all workers in all subordinated ethnic groups. The imposition of such uniform economic burdens served as a basis for the growth of working class consciousness and inter-ethnic unity between members of subordinated ethnic groups in political and economic struggles against the ruling class.

On the other hand, the ruling class often pursued a policy of differential allocation of economic and political benefits and burdens to different subordinated ethnic groups. This is not to suggest that merchants, planters, and colonial administrators consciously pursued policies of differential allocation in order to 'divide-and-rule'. But no matter what the intent behind their policies, the results were always the same - viz., differential allocation and the subsequent growth of ethnic conflict and boundaries among the working class.

Differential allocation was often justified in terms of ruling class racial stereotypes of subordinated ethnic groups, and served to cripple the economic and political power of any such group which the ruling class perceived as a threat to its own social, political, and economic power. Differential allocation also created socio-economic inequalities between subordinated ethnic groups which members of the ruling class 'explained' in terms of racial stereotypes. The presupposition of ruling class racial stereotypes by journalists and clergy, as well as the fact that the indigenous cultures of Africans and East Indians were largely destroyed or disrupted during their service as plantation labourers, insured that ruling class racist ideology was accepted, in varying degrees, by most members of subordinated ethnic

groups. When Portuguese, Afro-Guyanese, or Indo-Guyanese used ruling class racial stereotypes in attempts to 'explain' and strengthen their social and economic positions vis-a-vis each other, this served the interests of the ruling class insofar as it often inhibited working class unity in political and industrial struggles against the ruling class.

The idea that inter-ethnic conflict inhibited working class unity in political and industrial struggles against the ruling class is also implicit in the work of Selwyn Ryan on the political economy of Trinidad-Tobago. While Ryan does not emphasize the origin and dynamics of ethnic boundaries and conflict between Indo- and Afro-Trinidadians, he makes it clear that these factors were primary in preventing the People's National Movement (PNM) from achieving its goals of eliminating the racist colonial social order and rationalizing the economy to achieve self-sustaining growth and full employment. Ryan argues further that any attempt to use revolutionary violence would degenerate into inter-ethnic violence (1972: 8). Thus, ethnic boundaries serve the interests of Trinidad-Tobago's capitalist class, transnational corporations, and the British and U.S. governments insofar as 'racial' problems inhibit the sort of revolutionary violence which might set Trinidad-Tobago on the "Cuban road to socialism". Ryan's conclusions are relevant to this dissertation because they demonstrate that ethnic boundaries and conflict play a role in Trinidad-Tobago similar to the role that they play in Guyana - viz., they inhibit working class unity in political and economic struggles against the ruling class and foreign powers.

In Guyana, ethnic divisions within the working class were, in most cases, only mitigated during the times of economic crisis. Crisis in Guyana usually stemmed from a sharp decline in world sugar prices

which, in turn, resulted from overproduction of sugar on a world scale. In some cases, inflation throughout the capitalist world affected Guyana in ways that were beyond the control of the Guyanese ruling class. In the face of declining sugar prices or inflation, the ruling class would often decrease wages and raise taxes and rents of workers in order to maintain profit margins. In other cases, the ruling class used state-power to prevent recognition of trade unions. Such actions usually had various kinds of adverse effects on workers and farmers in all subordinated ethnic groups, and thus created conditions for the growth of working class resistance and working class consciousness. Thus, while ruling class policy played a role in promoting inter-ethnic conflict and racist ideology, it also played an unintended role in promoting working class struggle and working class consciousness. This is not to suggest that workers and farmers mechanically resisted increased ruling class pressure, and then relapsed into conflict and/or lethargy when the pressure abated. When increased ruling class pressure led workers and farmers to resist, their level of organization, and the ability of their organization to sustain itself, depended upon factors such as leadership, type and degree of class consciousness, the type and degree of repression, etc. Only by recognizing such factors is it possible to account for the form of, say, the sporadic strikes and 'riots' of 1905, and the increased post-war militancy which led to the rise of the PPP. Nevertheless, it appears that, in every case, concerted resistance was triggered by increased ruling class pressure, and it is this fact that is emphasized in the following diagram:

Contradictory Aspects of Ruling Class Policy

Diagram I

Ruling Class Policy of:	Effects of Policy on Indo- and Afro-Guyanese Workers and Farmers:
Imposition of roughly equal economic burdens upon workers and farmers in all subordinated ethnic groups (often in response to economic crises).	growth of working class consciousness; increased possibility of unity in political and economic struggles against the ruling class; decreased possibility of conflict.

Diagram II

Ruling Class Policy of:	Effects of Policy on Indo- and Afro-Guyanese Workers and Farmers:
differential allocation of economic and political benefits and burdens to workers and farmers in different subordinated ethnic groups.	increased use of ruling class racial stereotypes in attempts by each ethnic group to improve its social and economic position vis-a-vis the other; decreased possibility of unity in political economic struggles against the ruling class; hardening of ethnic boundaries.

These diagrams constitute a model based upon the concepts of class and class conflict which accounts for the contradictory tendencies which characterized Guyanese colonial history. This model accounts for the major instances of conflict and cooperation which occurred up to Guyanese independence in 1966. These occurrences will be treated in more detail in subsequent chapters.

In certain respects, the relationships characterized in this model are dialectical. When considered from a dialectical point of view, the development of objects, societies, personalities, or other entities is determined by the balance of opposing or contradictory tendencies within the entity in question. The state of overall development, or quality, of an entity is determined by the relative strengths of these

opposing tendencies. The relative strengths of these tendencies can be conceived as quantities, i.e., one tendency may be conceived as greater or stronger than another. When one tendency comes to predominate in such a way that its opposing tendencies are completely transformed or destroyed, the entity in question may lose its integrity, or begin to develop in a new direction. Further development will also be characterized by the interplay of new sets of opposing tendencies.

In the model outlined above, intersectional conflict and racist ideology represent one tendency, while class struggle and class ideology represent an opposing tendency. Development of these opposing tendencies cannot be understood without reference to the concepts of class and class conflict. While one tendency or the other predominated in various periods of Guyanese colonial history, its opposite was never totally negated. It should be noted that the resolution of the contradiction between these tendencies has not yet occurred. The political ascendancy of the working class and the predominance of revolutionary working class consciousness, realized through the struggle for socialism, may yet eliminate economic scarcity, differential allocation, inter-ethnic conflict, racist ideology, and ethnic boundaries in Guyana. On the other hand, inter-ethnic conflict and racist ideology could predominate to the point where Guyana could splinter into two "nations", one "Indian" and the other "African". In either case, the social formations emerging from such development would, in turn, be marked by new sets of contradictions.

It is realized that the development of Guyana's class structure and the incidents from Guyanese history mentioned in this chapter have not been explored in sufficient detail. They will be treated in more

detail in subsequent chapters that deal with specific instances of inter-ethnic cooperation and conflict in Guyana's colonial history.

In summary, the concepts of class, ethnicity, and ideology have been articulated in a dialectical model which attempts to explain the tendencies toward inter-sectional conflict and class struggle which characterized Guyanese colonial history. In subsequent chapters, a detailed examination of instances of inter-ethnic conflict and cooperation in Guyanese colonial history will be undertaken in order to determine the utility of this model. In the next chapter, after a brief treatment of some of Guyana's geographical features, an attempt shall be made to explicate class and inter-ethnic relations between Amerindians and Blacks in Guyanese slave society in light of the model outlined above.

CHAPTER III

CLASS AND ETHNICITY IN GUYANESE SLAVE SOCIETY

Introduction

In this chapter, a brief sketch of some of Guyana's main geographical features will be followed by a treatment of inter-ethnic relations between subordinated ethnic groups in Guyanese slave society. Most treatments of relations between subordinated ethnic groups in Guyanese slave society have focused upon the fact that plantation owners and the colonial government hired Amerindians to capture or kill runaway slaves. Yet there were also instances of cooperation between Amerindians and Black slaves in struggles against the ruling class. The most notable of these instances was a Black-Amerindian revolt against the Dutch planters and colonial government in Surinam which occurred in 1678. This revolt threatened the existence of all Dutch settlements along the "Wild Coast" from Surinam to Essequibo. After this revolt, the planters and the colonial government evolved policies which insured the loyalty of Amerindians in hunting down runaway slaves and in suppressing slave revolts. These policies were successful to the extent that Amerindians never again joined with slaves in any significant struggle against the Europeans. The Amerindian policies of the planters and colonial government also insured the development of animosity between Afro-Guyanese and Amerindians which lasted for hundreds of years. By the time of full and final emancipation in 1838, and for many years after, British colonial writers could not conceive of the sort of cooperation between Amerindians and Blacks which occurred in 1678. Consequently, accounts of this revolt are completely absent from their

works on Guyanese history.

It is clear that the same contradictory tendencies toward conflict and cooperation between subordinated ethnic groups which characterized post-emancipation Guyanese society were also present in Guyanese slave society. In this chapter, we shall see how these contradictory tendencies were related to the policies and practices of the ruling class.

The model outlined in Chapter II provides an adequate account of the cooperation between Amerindians and slaves in the 1678 rebellion. The Dutch planters imposed a similar economic burden - viz. slavery - upon each major subordinated ethnic group in Surinam and Guyana. Despite the vast ultural gulf between Amerindians and Africans, their common hatred of slavery and their Dutch masters enabled them to cooperate in the 1678 rebellion against the slave-holders. At the same time the ruling class policy of differential allocation of economic benefits and burdens to different subordinated ethnic groups explains subsequent conflict between Amerindians and Black slaves. Plantation owners found it more profitable to reward Amerindians for helping to keep Africans enslaved than to enslave both Africans and Amerindians. The system which emerged involved paying Amerindians to capture and/or kill runaway slaves, and paying Amerindians to assist in suppressing slave rebellions. This system promoted long and serious conflict and hostility between Blacks and Amerindians.

Section 1 - Land and People in Guyana

Guyana is located on the northeast Atlantic Coast of South America, and is similar to parts of neighbouring Venezuela, Brazil, and Surinam in terms of geography, climate, and distribution of natural resources. At the same time, Guyana is at the southwest extremity of the

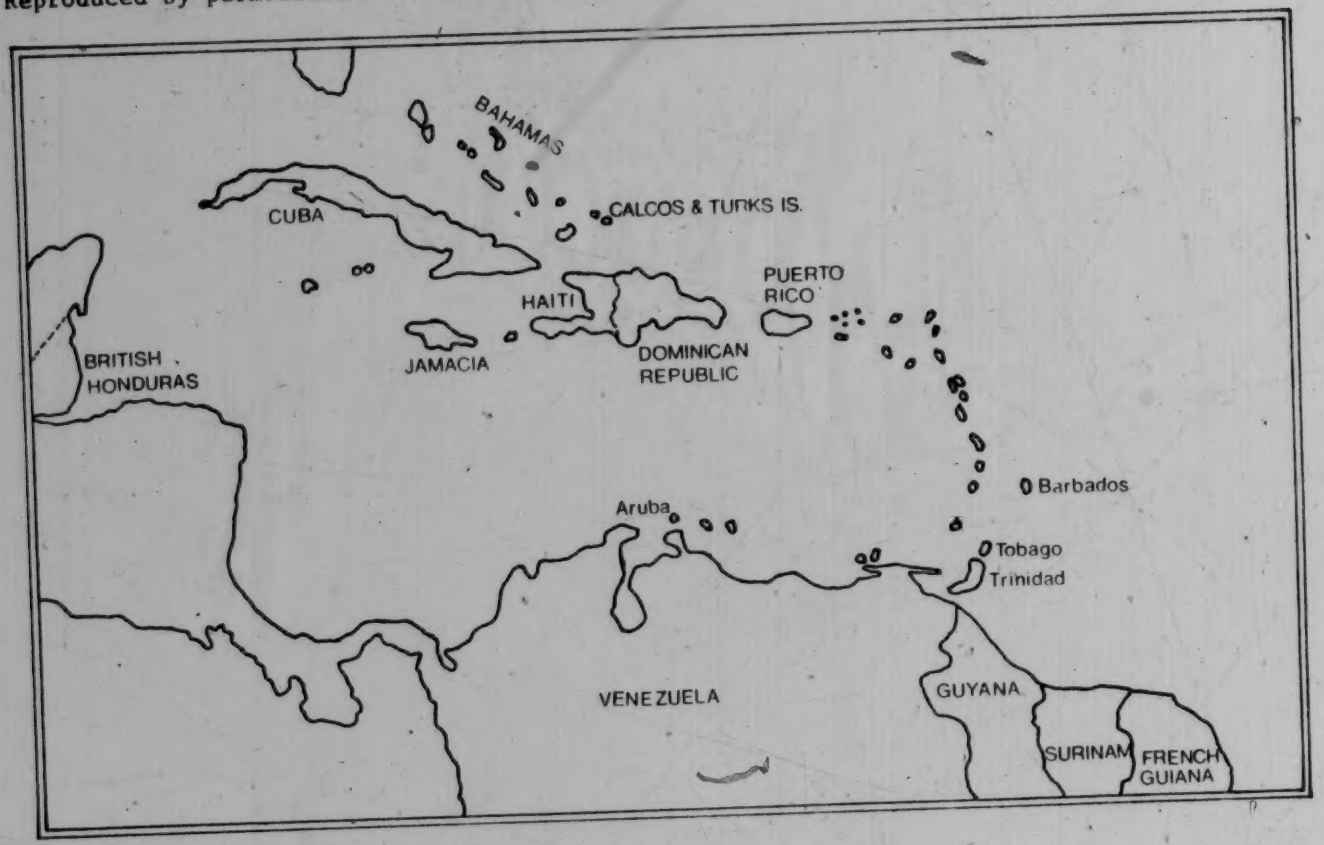
crescent of Caribbean islands which make up the present and former British West Indies (see Map I). Like Trinidad, Guyana's economy is largely based upon plantation agriculture, and its population is made up mainly of English-speaking descendants of African slaves and East Indian indentured labourers. Its cultural, economic, and political development were largely molded by British colonial domination, which lasted from the late 18th century until 1966.

"Guiana", an Amerindian word literally translated as "land of many waters", was the name given to the territory lying between the Orinoco and the Amazon rivers. It is bounded on the north by the Orinoco and the Atlantic, on the south by the rivers Negro and Amazon, and on the west by the Orinoco and the Cassaquine. It covers an area of approximately 690,000 square miles. This territory was divided into part of Brazil (formerly Portuguese Guiana), Venezuela (formerly Spanish Guiana), Guyana (formerly British Guiana), Surinam (formerly Dutch Guiana), and French Guiana.

Guyana is a country of approximately 83,000 square miles. It is bordered on the west by Venezuela and Brazil, on the east by Surinam, on the south and southwest by Brazil, and on the north by the Atlantic. Until 1831, the country comprised three different colonies, named after the three principal rivers which drain them: viz., Essequibo, Demerara, and Berbice.

There are four main natural regions in Guyana: savannah, equatorial rain forest, a hilly sand and clay area, and an alluvial coastal strip. There are approximately 2.5 million acres of savannah, divided between the vast Rupununi region in the southwest and the 2,000 square-mile region of intermediate savannah slightly inland in

MAP I. Guyana in relation to Latin America and the Caribbean. After Horowitz, Michael M. (ed.). Peoples and Cultures of the Caribbean. Copyright (c) 1971 by Michael M. Horowitz. Reproduced by permission of Doubleday and Co., Inc.



northeastern Berbice (Adamson 1972: 15). The Kanuku Mountains run from east to west along the northern border of the Rupunui and shield the savannah from rain clouds moving to the southwest. Approximately 60 inches of rain fall annually in the Rupunui savannah, generally between May and August. Average mean temperature approaches 90 degrees F. (King 1968: 12).

A broad belt of equatorial rain forest makes up approximately 77% of Guyana's total land area. While most of the soil in this area is made up of loam, lateritic earth, and loam sand, there are some areas of white sand and thin soils where dry, evergreen forests grow. The Pakaraima Mountain Range runs north and south along the forested area, and serves as Guyana's western border.

> A little less than one quarter of Guyana is covered by a heavily-forested, hilly sand and clay area slightly south of the coastal belt. This sand and clay area is bounded by the Pomeroon and Essequibo rivers on the west, the Courantyne on the east, and the north savannah on the south(Adamson 1972: 16).

The coastal strip occupies all of Guyana's coastline, and consists of low-lying, flat and swampy marine alluvium, varying in width from ten to forty miles. The soil of the strip is continuously enriched by silt-laden runoff from many rivers, including the Orinoco in the northwest, the Essequibo, Demerara, and Corentyne in the northwest. There are usually four distinct seasons: a long wet season from March to July, a long dry season from August to mid-November, a short wet season from mid-November to January, and a short dry season from January to March. Rainfall averages about 90 inches annually, and a variation between 60 and 120 inches is common. Humidity varies from 88% in the mornings to 75% in the afternoons. The temperature is uniformly high on the coast, never falling below 60 degrees F. This climatic stability is

due primarily to the influence of the strong North East Trade Winds. While Guyana lies within the equatorial zone, it is south of the hurricane belt.

Prior to European penetration, Amerindian groups, including Caribs, Arawaks, Macusis, and Wai Wai, practiced shift-and-burn cultivation in what is now Guyana.

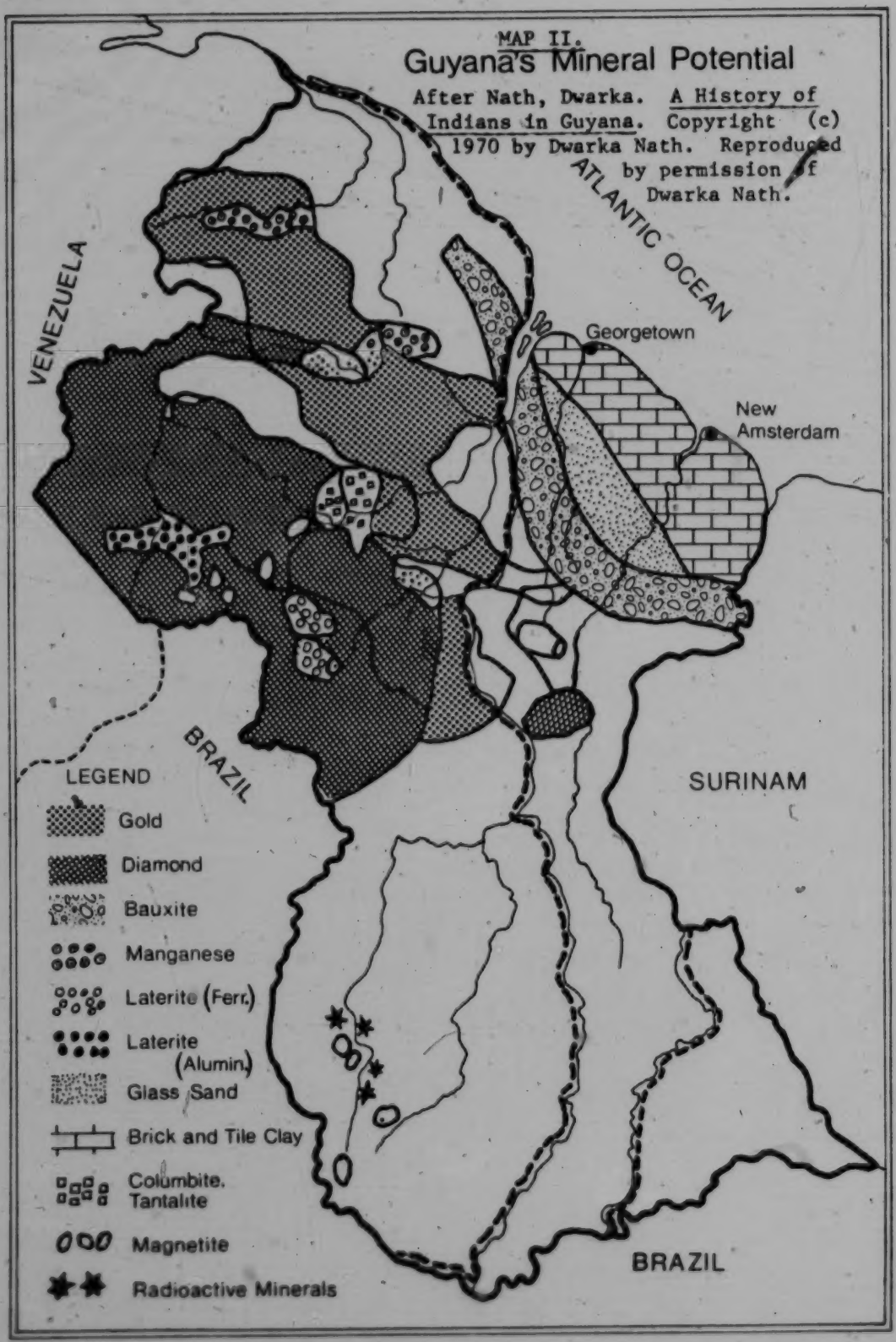
Guyana has large amounts of natural resources in its interior, including uranium, gold, balata (i.e., the coagulated latex of the bullet-wood tree), diamonds, timber, bauxite, columbite, manganese, and kaolin (see Map II). The potential for use of Guyana's rivers for generation of hydroelectric power is enormous, and oil has recently been discovered offshore along Guyana's continental shelf. Although there are some large cattle ranches in the Rupununi region and several mining and timber operations in other parts of Guyana's interior, the economic potential of the area remains largely untapped (see Map III). This is mainly due to the lack of roads or railways connecting interior resource areas to navigable rivers or to the coastal strip. Although Guyana, like Brazil, Venezuela, and Surinam, is covered by an extensive network of river systems, they are often un-navigable due to the presence of inland rapids.

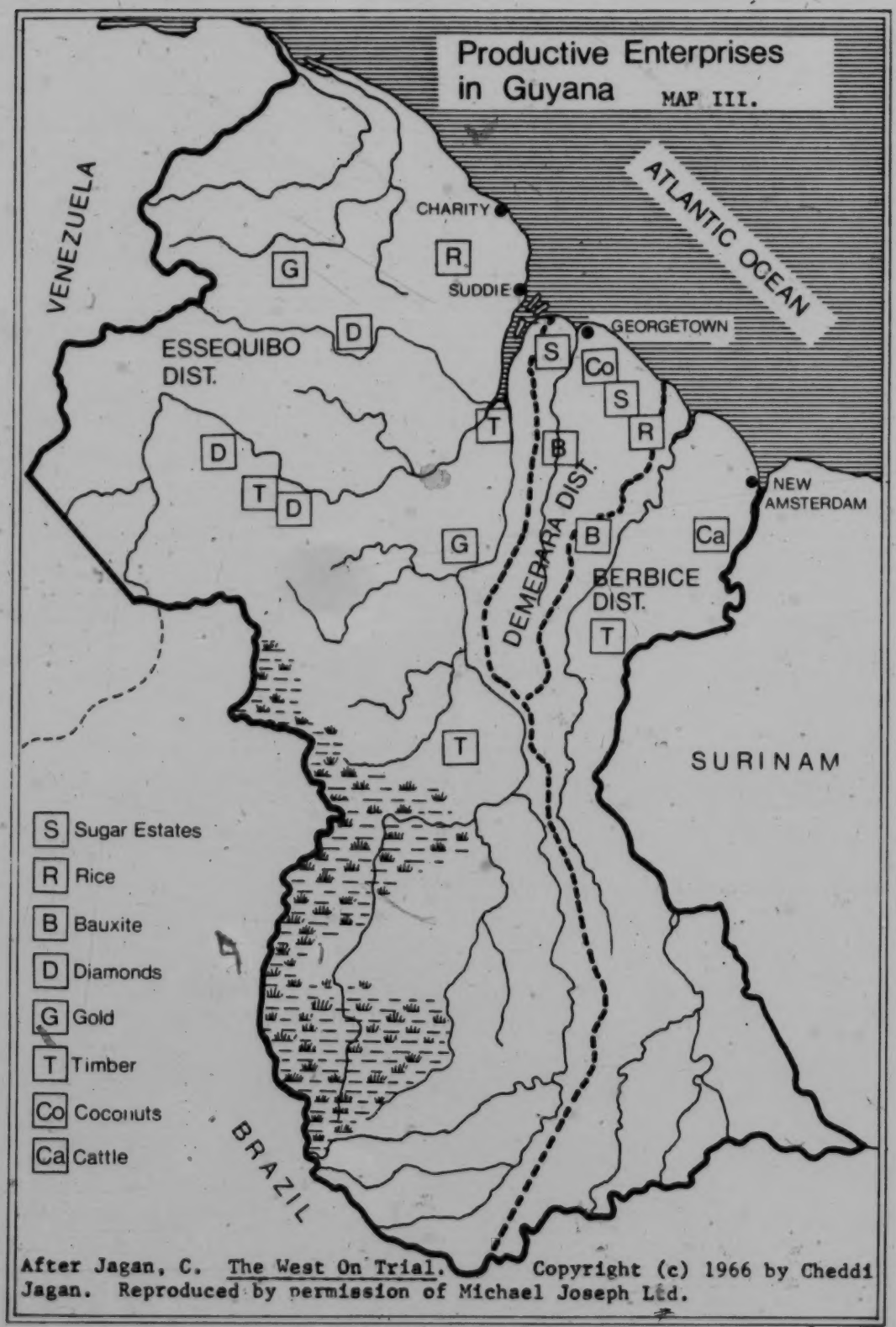
In spite of the presence of natural resources which could support extensive manufacturing industries, Guyana is mainly an agricultural country. Cultivation of Guyana's two main crops, rice and sugar cane, is confined to a portion of the coastal strip, as is approximately 85% of Guyana's population of 760,000 ("Daily Chronicle, August 6, 1973. See Map IV). Guyana's two coastal cities, Georgetown (the capital) and New Amsterdam, have populations of approximately 120,000 and 16,000

MAP II.

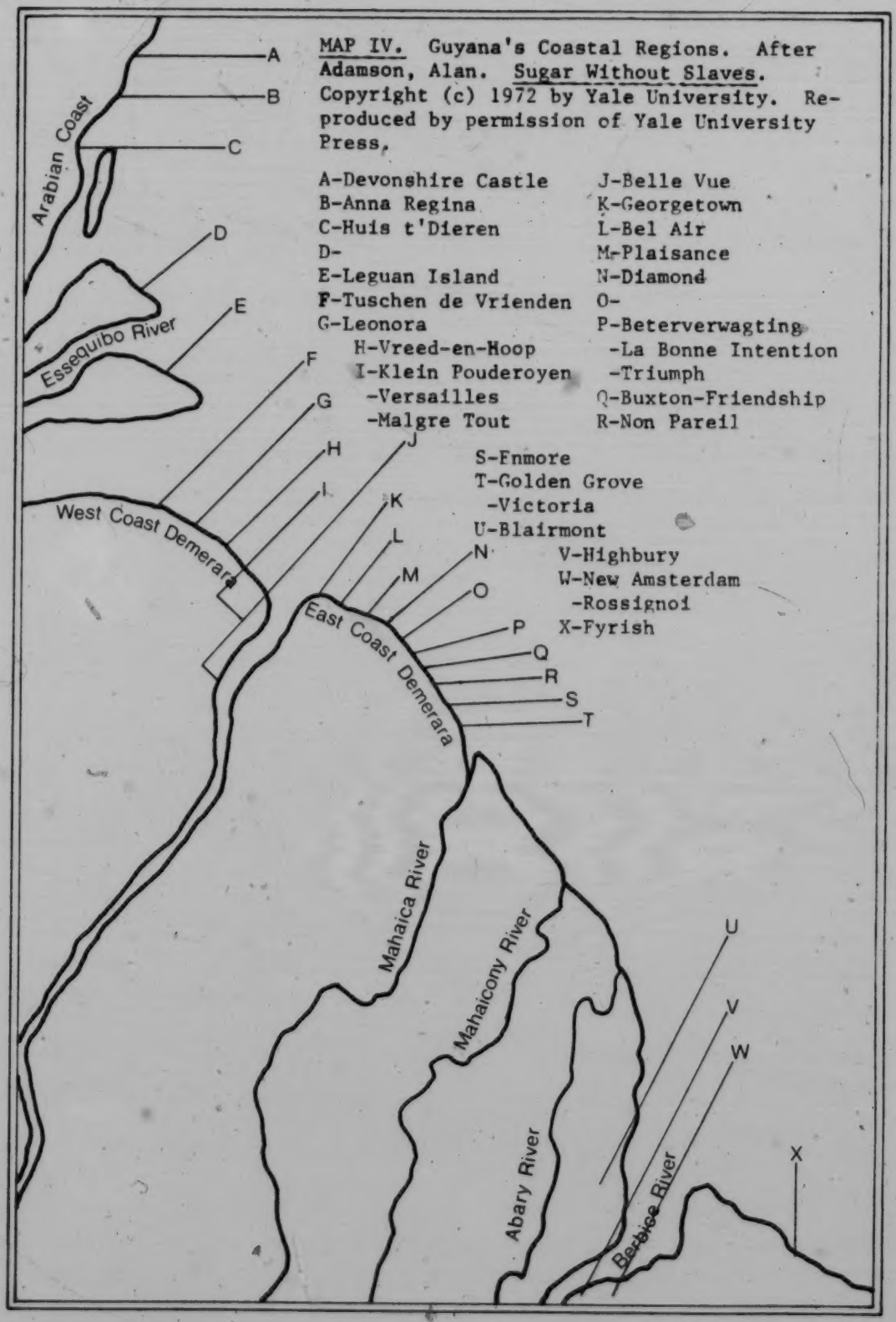
Guyana's Mineral Potential

After Nath, Dwarka. A History of Indians in Guyana. Copyright (c) 1970 by Dwarka Nath. Reproduced by permission of Dwarka Nath.





After Jagan, C. The West On Trial. Copyright (c) 1966 by Cheddi Jagan. Reproduced by permission of Michael Joseph Ltd.



MAP IV. Guyana's Coastal Regions. After Adamson, Alan. Sugar Without Slaves. Copyright (c) 1972 by Yale University. Reproduced by permission of Yale University Press.

A-Devonshire Castle
B-Anna Regina
C-Huis t'Dieren
D-
E-Leguan Island
F-Tuschen de Vrienden
G-Leonora
H-Vreed-en-Hoop
I-Klein Pouderoyen
-Versailles
-Malgre Tout
J-Belle Vue
K-Georgetown
L-Bel Air
M-Plaisance
N-Diamond
O-
P-Beterverwagting
-La Bonne Intention
-Triumph
Q-Buxton-Friendship
R-Non Pareil
S-Fnmore
T-Golden Grove
-Victoria
U-Blairmont
V-Highbury
W-New Amsterdam
-Rossignol
X-Fyrish

respectively (Thakur 1973: 33).

Section 2 - European Penetration of Guyana

European penetration of the Guianas was, from its inception, aimed at the rapid accumulation of wealth. The Spanish and English officers and buccaneers who first investigated the Guiana coastline and river mouths were looking for gold or a short route to the East Indies. Neither were found, so another type of enterprise was attempted. From the late sixteenth century to the middle of the seventeenth century, agents of various Dutch companies traded manufactured goods for raw cotton, dyes, and wood with the Amerindians, and established the first permanent European forts and trading posts in the Guianas (king 1968: 36). Around 1621, the Dutch West India Company secured a monopoly on all trade and colonization in the Guianas (Daly 1966: 36). Dutch West India Company representatives traded with the Amerindians from forts at Kyk-over-al, 50 miles up the Essequibo River, and Nassau, 50 miles up the Berbice River. The inland locations of the forts made them relatively inaccessible to raiders from other European nations, and provided access to riverain lands which were cultivated for provisions by Angolan slaves (King 1968: 36). The British maintained a fort and trading post in Surinam.

Plantation agriculture did not become well-established in Guyana and Surinam until approximately 1651 when Dutch plantation owners were driven from Brazil. Many of them fled to the Essequibo Coast with their slaves. The first shipment of sugar to Holland was made in 1661, and by 1669, 60,000 pounds were exported (Deerr 1949).

By 1670, there were three Dutch West India Company plantations

in Essequibo, two worked by 12-14 slaves each, and the third by 25-30 slaves. Several private plantations were established by 1678 (King 1968: 36).

One of the most pressing problems faced by plantation owners and the Dutch West India Company was the provision of an adequate labour supply. The numbers of Angolan slaves shipped to Guiana by the Dutch West India Company were insufficient to meet the needs of the plantations. Consequently, planters and the Dutch West India Company were forced to enslave Amerindians.

Im Thurn writes that the native populations of the Guianas were composed of Warrau, Arawaks, Caribs, Ackawai, Arecunas, Macusis, Waipianas, Tarumas, and Pianogiottos (1883: 170). While Im Thurn did not estimate the numbers of the Amerindian groups at the time of Dutch penetration, he noted that the Warrau, Arawaks, and Caribs occupied the coastal areas, and that the others lived further inland.

> General Byam, in 1668, wrote that there were about 8,000 families of Arawak Indians on the lowlands between the Corentine and Waini River, besides Waraus and Caribs (PP LXXVII Col. 2822: 441)*.

As in North America, European settlers exploited existing rivalries between different Amerindian groups - notably, warfare between the Caribs and the Arawaks - in order to further their own interests. Before 1667, the Caribs helped the English in Surinam to defend their settlement against the Dutch and Spaniards, and supplied Arawak captives

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* Citations from Parliamentary Papers refer to the printed collection of colonial documents which were of interest to parliamentary proceedings at Westminster. The page numbers refer to the volumes in the State Papers Room of the British Library, Great Russell Street, London.

for the English to enslave. Also the Caribs captured or killed runaway African and Amerindian slaves for the planters (Buve 1975: 39). Later, in the constant warfare between the Spanish and Dutch in Essequibo and Demerara, the Dutch allied themselves with the Caribs and the Spanish allied themselves with the Arawaks (Buve 1975: 39). Stedman wrote that, in 1596, Dutch traders were driven from Essequibo by Spaniards and Amerindians (1962: 128). European forts and trading posts were sometimes attacked solely by Amerindians. Stedman claimed that the Spanish were eventually driven from Guyana because of Amerindian attacks (1962: 128).

Relations between the Dutch West India Company and the private planters on the one hand, and various Amerindian groups on the other, were characterized by a major contradiction. The Dutch needed to have good relations with the Amerindians so that the Amerindians would not attack their settlements, trading posts, and plantations. They also needed Amerindian aid in capturing or killing runaway slaves, suppressing slave rebellions, and in repelling attacks by other European powers (see Buve 1975: 39-40). De Villiers, in describing Dutch policy in the 1660's, wrote that all trade depended on the goodwill of the Indian tribes (1911: 19). At the same time, the Dutch West India Company and the private planters needed Amerindian plantation labourers. Enslavement of Amerindians, however, often invited Amerindian attacks on plantations and trading posts. Rodway writes,

> In 1672, there had been disputes with the Caribs, and the Canje Post in Berbice was plundered and burnt, but being pursued by a few soldiers from Fort Nassau, the Indians retired up the river.... On account of difficulties connected with the Indian slave trade, treaties were made in Berbice, as in Essequibo, declaring the neighbouring tribes to be

> absolutely free. Before this was done, Indians sometimes sold their relations or neighbours for spirits or other coveted objects (1891: 18).
>
> .... the great trouble was that.... free [i.e., non-company] planters went out and bought their wives from the Indians, and even got them to sell their friends, who were as free as themselves; and this led to quarrels (1891: 41).

In spite of decrees from the Governor, the private planters and the Dutch West India Company continued to buy or abduct Amerindian slaves, and Amerindians who were already enslaved were not freed.

The enslavement of Amerindians along with Africans raised the possibility that they might cooperate in revolts against the ruling class. While this possibility was not realized in the territory that became Guyana, a serious Amerindian-African revolt occurred in the neighbouring colony of Surinam in 1678. This revolt lasted more than three years, and threatened all Dutch settlements from Surinam to Essequibo. Although hostilities were confined to Surinam, it is significant that Dutch attempts to enlist the aid of Berbice Arawaks in putting down the revolt failed.

Section 3 - The Amerindian-African Revolt of 1678

Once the British were driven out of Surinam by the Dutch and their Arawak allies in 1667, the Dutch Governor attempted to terminate warfare between the Caribs and Arawaks. His attempts were unsuccessful. Buve writes,

> Despite the efforts of successive governors to put an end to the inter-tribal wars the Surinam Caribs and the Berbice Arawaks continued raiding each other and complained to the authorities of outrages perpetrated by the other side. The Caribs grew increasingly irritated with the Dutch authorities, who refused to grant them the same freedom of trade as they had enjoyed under the English, while at the same time they had to contend with increasing extortion at the hands of the

> white traders or 'bokkenruylders' (traders in Indian slaves) to whom they were frequently heavily in debt (1975: 40).

In the latter half of 1678, the Caribs attacked Dutch trading posts and plantations. At first the Caribs killed African slaves as well as whites; later, the Caribs began persuading the African slaves to join them. This policy met with increasing success, and the economic life of Surinam quickly came to a standstill (Buve 1975: 41). The Dutch administration and planters attempted unsuccessfully to incite the Berbice Arawaks against the Carib and African rebels (Buve 1975: 42), and began selling Black slaves to Barbados planters in order to prevent them from joining in the revolt (Buve 1975: 44). Heinsius, the Dutch governor, estimated the number of slaves who had fled or joined the Caribs at 700-800. Buve writes,

> .... we can deduce from the correspondence between Heinsius and the Company directors that in several instances fugutive negro-slaves had gradually taken over the core of the resistance from the rebel Indians, who were becoming more and more inclined towards peace..... In July 1680..... peace negotiations were opened between the whites and several groups of Indians. However, the fugitives living with the Indians were regarded as deserters and the peace terms could on no account be extended to them. Their stubborn resistance was therefore only to be expected. The fugitive chief, Ganimet, who lived with his followers on the Para, decided to continue the struggle and even threatened the Indians of the peace party with reprisals (1975: 45).

Military campaigns and peace negotiations aimed at terminating the revolt continued until 1681, when the Dutch finally succeeded in making peace with the Caribs and killing most of the remaining Black rebels.

The lessons of the 1678 African-Amerindian revolt were not lost on the Dutch, and a new, successful Amerindian policy was evolved. In order to understand the operation of this policy, it is necessary to note several important political and economic changes which occurred in

Guyana during the first half of the 18th Century.

Section 4 - Social and Economic Changes in the 18th Century

During the early 18th Century, Dutch planters found that fertility of soils along the banks of rivers in Guyana's interior declined rapidly (Adamson 1972: 19), and cultivation shifted to the coastal strip. Since much of the land in the coastal strip was below sea level at high tide, its cultivation required the construction of elaborate reclamation and drainage systems (i.e., empoldering). K.F.S.King describes the social and economic consequences of this development as follows:

> .... although the coastal lands....were more fertile, their use entailed great expenditure on drainage. A chain reaction was therefore set up. Because of the high initial and recurrent costs of draining, small-scale farming was uneconomic, and only plantation crops, because of their economies of scale, could be grown. This led to the establishment of a wealthy group of land-owners and the early stifling of the growth of a farm-owning peasant class. Perhaps most important of all it geared agricultural production to export crops, and returns on which justified the considerable outlay on reclamation. Inevitably, also, it concentrated the population on the narrow coastal belt. Guyana, for all practical purposes became an island, the southern boundary of which was the forest to the south of the flat coastland (1968: 38).

Around the middle of the 18th Century, planters in Essequibo had become dissatisfied with the inability of the Dutch West India Company to provide slaves and soldiers. Company governors were unable to stop smuggling of slaves from Barbados and other parts of the British West Indies. Possibly realizing their inability to prevent free trade, company directors allowed planters to buy and sell commodities (except slaves) to other Dutch and foreign companies. In 1742, the Company governor of Essequibo, Laurens Storm Van s'Gravesande, secured a ten-year tax holiday for all new European colonists, irrespective of

nationality. Many English planters from the British West Indian islands took advantage of this offer, and settled on the coast of Demerara. Adamson writes,

> The founding of Demerara and the move to the coast are associated with.... the transfer of British capital and British slave labor from the Caribbean islands to Guyana. Well before the end of the eighteenth century the soil of many of the islands had begun to wear out. By contrast Guyana possessed a soil so rich that little more was required than "to plant in the rainy and to reap in the dry season and the Earth gave her increase without manure, the plough or the harrow." Guyana also enjoyed "the advantages of freedom from hurricane, of regular and abundant rains, of plentiful crops of sugar and cotton, of the ability to supply ample provisions for Negro consumption, and of mildness and wholesomeness of climate. In the islands, removing the produce of the field by means of mules was infinitely expensive and such transport cut back into profits. In the flat lands of Guiana, transport was by water and cheap. In Guiana, the same number of labourers could produce every commodity in the Caribbean islands more cheaply and with less exertion."
>
> As early as 1760, Gravesande found the English planters in the majority in Demerara. Their numbers continued to grow until, by 1813 95 percent of the white settlers were British (1972: 21-22; see also Farley 1955a: 26).

The journals of Gravesande provide insights into the plantation system during the 18th century. It seems that most plantations had at least 50 slaves. Individuals establishing plantations were usually sold one or more lots of 150 acres by the Company. Many such lots were empoldered soon after purchase. Once drainage canals were dug, they were used to transport canes to the mills in small boats, or "punts". The larger plantations had mills (i.e., "factories") powered by draught animals. In 1769, Demerara had 206 plantations with 5,967 slaves, and Essequibo had 92 plantations with 3,968 slaves (Gravesande 1911: 400). In 1766, 3,924 hogsheads of muscovado sugar were produced in Essequibo and Demerara (Doerr 1949).

Slaves were organized into gangs according to the types of work

they performed. There would be a gang composed of the most healthy and robust men and women which would be used for the heaviest tasks - e.g., clearing ground, empoldering, cutting cane, and feeding the mill. Another gang composed of young boys and girls, pregnant women, and convalescents would weed and perform other lighter tasks. A third gang composed of young children, with an elderly female attendant, would weed in the garden, feed domestic animals, and perform other tasks close to the planter's residence. Planters usually retained a white manager to provide overall direction of plantation work, while Black "drivers", themselves slaves, supervised particular gangs (Farley 1955b). Supplies, clothing, and provisions for the slaves were often lacking, although slaves were allowed to cultivate provision plots (Farley 1953: 104). They raised root crops, cow-peas from West Africa, and some cattle. In many cases, slaves were allowed to sell their produce and keep the profits. This allowed them to accumulate savings, and in some cases, to buy their freedom. Nevertheless, Gravesande reports that planters generally treated slaves cruelly (1911). Execution and/or torture of slaves who ran away or offended whites in any way was common and accepted as a normal part of life (Stedman 1962: 125).

Planters and their families usually maintained a multi-storied "great house" on their plantations, while slaves occupied mud barracks (i.e., "logies") with thatched palm roofs. The wealthiest planters also maintained slave-built residences in Georgetown (Farley 1955b).

Plantation owners were usually in debt to one or more "merchant houses" in Holland or England. Merchant houses would furnish planters with credit in exchange for guaranteed repayment in kind, or for cash with interest. Failure of the planter to pay usually meant that the

merchant house to which his plantation was "encumbered" would automatically receive all produce from the plantation, or, eventually, the plantation itself (Pares 1960). Nevertheless, many of the larger plantations made large profits, and West Indian planters acquired reputations in London for having enormous wealth.

Section 5 - Eighteenth Century Dutch Policy on Amerindians

At the time of Gravesande, Amerindians still made up a small proportion of the slave population. In 1762, there were 346 whites, 244 Indian slaves, and 3,833 Black slaves in Berbice (Rodway 1891: 173). In 1751, each planter was allowed to possess six Amerindian slaves (Rodway 1891: 140). Rodway writes,

> The Governor was continually charged [by the directors of the Dutch West India Company] to do his utmost to keep on friendly terms with the Indians, and not to allow them to be badly treated by the planters, or to permit any interference in their quarrels. The regulations as to Indians of the Berbice river not being slaves, and their not being taken away from the colony, were very stringent, only those brought from the interior being allowed to be sold. The system of giving them presents was commenced about this time but it had not yet attained too much importance, these gifts consisting of rewards for catching runaway slaves, and now and then a silver necklace to one of the chiefs, for special services (1891: 160).

Gravesande was reluctant to arm the Caribs in order to enlist their aid in putting down an attack by the Acuways to Dutch settlements in Essequibo. He wrote that the Amerindians only served the Dutch for fear or profit, and that if they asked for gifts that the government could not give, they might turn on the Dutch (1911: 340-342). It is also clear from Gravesande's journals that he was quite willing to see one Amerindian group fight another in order to avoid the possibility of their allying against the Dutch (1911: 340-342). The

practice of giving presents to the Amerindians and symbols of office to their leaders allowed the Dutch to mobilize large numbers of Amerindians in emergencies. It was estimated that in 1790, the Caribs could raise 1000 fighting men (Dalton 1855: 70). De Villiers describes Gravesande's mobilization of the Amerindians in 1763 to contain Cuffy's Revolt, the most serious slave uprising in Guyanese history.

> ....the actual force of this revolt was confined to a colony for which Storm was in no sense responsible [i.e., Berbice]. But danger to Berbice bred danger to Demerara and Essequibo; so Storm disposed of the whole of his force to help Berbice in its extremity. He called upon the Indians from every part of the colony. He set Caribs and Arawaks in motion throughout Essequibo - from the Rupununi and the Cuyuni to the Corentin and the Abari; and in large measure to this successful use of the Indians we may attribute the safety of the sister colony (1911: 14).

After the success of Gravesande in using Amerindians to contain the 1763 revolt, the policy of cementing alliances with presents and symbols of leadership became a permanent feature of Dutch policy. Mary Noel Menzies writes,

> As a reward for these services [during the 1763 revolt], presents were liberally shared out to the Indians. After the 1772 uprising, suppressed by the Indians under Captain van der Heyden, the Indian chiefs were given silver ornaments, looking glasses and other articles by the colonial authorities. In 1774 the Court of Policy [i.e., a sort of Governor's Council composed of planters] suggested that, in order to cement the bond of unity between the Dutch and the Indians, staves of office should be presented to the chiefs. First awarded in 1778, these staves became symbols of a chieftainship under the Dutch. They were prized by the Indian chiefs.... In a letter dated 1783 from the Directors of the Company to the officials in the colony, stipulations were laid down to maintain the favour of the Indians, especially the Caribs. Land was to be given them so that they might be induced to remain in one place, presents were to be distributed at regular intervals, and the Captains, or Owls, to be provided with silver-headed sticks of office engraved with the Arms of the Company, and with silver collars and rum, among other things. As the desertions among the negroes increased, the Indians were more and more utilized in the bush expeditions for their capture.

> This development led to the adoption of a regular system of presents... (1974: 67-68).

By the late 18th century, Amerindians slavery had virtually disappeared, and government forces were strong enough to crush any Amerindian band that attacked European settlements. Consequently, such attacks ceased. Relations between Black slaves, Europeans, and Amerindians assumed a single dimension: Amerindians were paid in gold or in other articles to kill or capture runaway slaves and to assist in crushing slave uprisings. In 1772, Amerindians were given salempores, trumpets, and looking glasses, while their leaders were given silver jewelry and hats trimmed with silver lace, for helping to crush a slave revolt in Essequibo (Rodway 1891: 243). In the 1790's, slaves in Essequibo attempted to join the bands of escaped slaves that were living in the bush (i.e., "Bush Negroes"). Approximately 800 Carib warriors were paid 5,500 gold florins for helping to wipe out the camps of the escaped slaves (Rodway 1891 Vol. II: 77-78). In other instances, Amerindians and 'Bush Negroes' in the interior regions of Surinam and Guyana coexisted peacefully.

Section 6 - British Policy on Amerindians

Guyana came under British control in the late 18th century. After some hesitation, the British colonial govetnment continued the Dutch policy of giving gifts to Amerindians and awarding symbols of office to their leaders. According to Schomburgk, the government maintained a large house in Georgetown for visiting Amerindians (1922: 52). There were several Government Protectors of Indians, or postholders, who distributed presents and symbols of office to Amerindian groups. These posts were usually filled by prominent planters or merchants

(Schomburgk 1922: 53). The policy of securing Amerindian loyalty with regular presents was carried out only sporadically by the British colonial government as successive administrations were more or less reluctant to allocate funds for the purchase of ornaments, cloth, jewelry, etc. (Menzies 19: 70-77). In spite of the sporadic distribution of presents to Amerindians by the British, a revolt of 2,000 slaves was put down by "a considerable commando" of Caribs and Warraus led by a Colonel Hillhouse in 1823 (Schomburgk 1922: 23).

Postholders often allowed Amerindians to be employed as woodcutters on timber grants allocated to Europeans by the colonial government. According to Schomburgk,

> .... they had to perform the hardest woodcutting tasks on the timber grants, months at a time, for a few worthless glass beads.... the employers themselves frankly admitting that an Indian, as a workman, is worth double a negro. The slightest suspicion of deceit on the part of his employer sends the Indian back to his wandering life in the forests, never to return (1922: 53).

Amerindians were, however, known and used primarily as slave catchers, and it appears that ethnic boundaries between Blacks and Amerindians in the coastal areas were sharply drawn.

> Mixtures of Indians and Negroes are very rare, the former generally regarding the latter with supreme contempt, even hating them like hereditary enemies (Schomburgk 1922: 45).

Schomburgk reports that Blacks in Georgetown often attacked and robbed drunken Amerindians (1922: 52). In spite of the hostility between Blacks and Amerindians in the coastal area, it appears that groups of Bush Negroes, in both Surinam and the interior of Guyana, did not generally come into conflict with Amerindian groups.

By the first half of the 19th century, European diseases and rum (often sold by postholders) had taken their toll of the coastal

Amerindians. While 800 male Carib warriors had helped to suppress the slave revolt of 1794, the 1841 census recorded their total number at 500 (Schomburgk 1922: 54). Schomburgk reports that by the 1830's, nine-tenths of the Arawaks, and half of the Akawais and Warraus had disappeared (1922: 54).

When full and final emancipation came in 1838, the Europeans no longer required the services of the Amerindians for slave catching. The Government house in Georgetown for visiting Amerindians was allowed to go to ruin, and, as early as 1831, the annual presents for Amerindians were cut off (Menzies 1974: 82). When Schomburgk visited Guyana shortly after emancipation, he wrote,

> .... While the government and the planters wanted the Amerindians to suppress the many insurrections of the slaves, it used to wheedle him and once a year fix a certain day to give him a big spread and valuable presents, whereat several thousands, wearing the most beautiful feather ornaments would generally be gathered; all these means of recognition have been abandoned. "They are now of no more use to us, and there is no need to worry any more about them" is the stereotyped answer which the astonished questioner receives (1922: 53).

Since that time, Amerindians have been marginal to the mainstream of economic activity in Guyana.

Section 7 - Inter-Ethnic Relations in Guyanese Slave Society

According to the model outlined in Chapter II, more or less uniform imposition of economic burdens upon subordinated ethnic groups promoted unity between these groups in struggles against the ruling class. Apparently, such a process culminated in their rebellion of 1678. Neither Amerindians nor Blacks wanted to be slaves.

The model also suggests that conflict between subordinated ethnic groups originated in the ruling class policy of differential allocation

of economic benefits and burdens to different subordinated ethnic groups. Relations between Blacks and Amerindians conform to this aspect of the model insofar as conflict and hostility between them originated in the Dutch and British policies of paying Amerindians to help in suppressing slave rebellions. Although such hostility predominated in Guyana's coastal area for centuries, there is evidence that relations between groups of 'Bush Negroes' and Amerindian groups in the interior regions of Surinam and Guyana were peaceful. In short, cooperation and conflict between Blacks and Amerindians in Guyanese slave society can only be understood in light of ruling class policies. These, in turn, can only be understood in the context of class struggle - viz., the constant struggle between the masters and the slaves. In the next chapter, we shall see that this interplay of inter-ethnic conflict, cooperation, and ruling class policy also characterized relations between subordinated ethnic groups in the post-emancipation period.

CHAPTER IV

THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF ETHNIC BOUNDARIES 1847-1905

Introduction

In this chapter, a brief discussion of the political-economy of emancipation and immigration will be followed by a treatment of the effect of economic crises and ruling class policy upon inter-ethnic relations in the strike of 1847-48, the anti-Portuguese Riots of 1847 and 1856, and the strike of 1905.

According to the model presented in Chapter II, the response of the planters to international capitalist crises often involved the imposition of uniform economic burdens upon all working class ethnic groups. When this occurred, Indo-Guyanese, Afro-Guyanese, and Portuguese workers often joined in strikes or other acts of resistance. Such concerted action usually brought a return to the 'normal' ruling class policies of differential allocation. The strike of 1847-48 conformed to this pattern insofar as East Indian and Portuguese indentured labourers joined Afro-Guyanese plantation labourers in a strike against a 25% wage reduction imposed by planters in response to an international capitalist crisis. Ruling class policies of differential allocation compelled the indentured labourers to return to work, and this broke the strike. Ethnic boundaries between Blacks, on the one hand, and East Indians and Portuguese, on the other, probably had their origins in the bitterness which followed the failure of this strike.

Ruling class policies of differential allocation also promoted the burning and looting of Portuguese shops by Blacks and some East Indians in 1848, 1856, and 1898. By giving Portuguese from Madeira

shorter indenture periods than Africans and East Indians, and by extending them credit which was denied to Blacks and Coloureds, the ruling class was able to create a Portuguese petit bourgeoisie. This development protected ruling class interests insofar as it undermined the economic position of Black and Coloured retailers after emancipation, focused the hostility of non-whites (i.e., Blacks, Coloureds, and East Indians) on the Portuguese petit bourgeoisie rather than the ruling class, and promoted the growth and hardening of ethnic boundaries between non-whites and Portuguese.

Concerted action by Afro- and Indo-Guyanese workers in the strike of 1905 was, as in 1847-48, a response to a wage-cut imposed by planters in the face of an international capitalist crisis. During the same period, ruling class policies of differential allocation, particularly allocation of agricultural land, led to conflict and the hardening of ethnic boundaries between Indo- and Afro-Guyanese. In the remainder of this chapter, these events will be examined in more detail.

Section 1 - The Political Economy of Emancipation and Immigration

After an interchange of Dutch, British, and French control during the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars, Guyana became a British colony in 1803. By that time, Guyana was the major cotton producer in the British Empire (Farley 1955a: 32). The unification of Berbice, Demerara, and Essequibo in 1815 was, in large measure, a ruling class attempt to streamline political and military organization in order to counter the threat of slave insurrections (Farley 1955).

The importance of Guyana's cotton to the British Empire was shortlived. By 1830, production of cotton and coffee in Guyana

became unprofitable because of American competition and colonial trade restrictions (Adamson 1972: 25). From that time until the present, the main productive activity on Guyana's plantations has been the cultivation and partial refining of sugar cane for export.

Although planters had largely overcome problems connected with sugar production by use of slave labour and extensive empoldering on the coastal strip, their viability as capitalists also depended upon the cooperation of other elements of British capital in maintaining the slave trade and protection of West Indian sugar in the British market. By the beginning of the 19th century, such cooperation could no longer be relied upon. Merchant capital from trade in slaves, sugar, and rum had made possible the development of a class of industrial capitalists in Britain (Williams 1945), whose interests came into conflict with those of the planters in the British West Indies. Jack Gratus writes,

> By raising tariffs against the products of other countries and permitting the produce of the West Indies - sugar, in particular - to enter at a cheaper price, the people of Britain may have benefited in the early days of the colonial system, but long before the end of the eighteenth century slave-grown sugar had proved to be more expensive that sugar grown by free labour. Cheap sugar had therefore become dear sugar, and the only people who continued to benefit from the system were the West Indian merchants and the plantation proprietors....
> The call went out to end the West Indian monopoly, and open the trade to competition from other sugar producing countries. The heated debate which took place between the free traders and the West Indian monopolies was further aggravated by the East Indian merchants whose sugar was not tainted with slavery and was, more important still, cheaper to produce.... There was an identity of interests between the (religious-motivated) abolitionists and the East Indian (planters and merchants).... (1973: 209).

The resolution of this conflict in favour of the abolitionists, the free traders (mostly industrial capitalists), and the East Indian planters and merchants culminated in abolition of the slave trade in

1807, emancipation of the slaves in 1834, the Sugar Duties Act of 1846 (which allowed all foreign sugar to enter the British market on the same terms as British West Indian sugar), and the Free Trade Act of 1876.

Planters in British Guiana received £4,924,989 for the 'loss' of their 82,824 slaves (Adamson 1972: 31). Also, ex-slaves had to undergo an "apprenticeship" period whereby they were compelled to work, at nominal wages, for 7-1/2 hours per day for their former masters, for periods of four to six years. Because of discontent among the ex-slaves, apprenticeship was terminated in 1838, two years before its statutory lapse (Green 1976).

All of these developments, coupled with recurrent capitalist crises of overproduction of sugar on a world scale, threatened the existence of the plantation system in the British West Indies. In Guyana, the planters adopted several strategies which enabled plantation agriculture to survive, albeit in changed form. The main strategies were importation of indentured labour, and rationalization of production - i.e., adoption of more efficient agricultural techniques and adoption of technological improvements in the refining or "factory" process.

Abolition of the slave trade and emancipation of the slaves meant that the planters were compelled to pay ex-slaves for their labour. More importantly, it meant that the ex-slaves could either use their new-found status in order to withhold their labour-power in order to enforce demands for higher wages, or pool their savings in order to buy estates for themselves. The planters attempted to counter the latter course by agreeing amongst themselves not to break up estates

into small plots for sale to ex-slaves, and not to sell entire plantations to cooperatives composed of ex-slaves. By 1850, however, 25 estates had been purchased by groups of ex-slaves, and several others had been broken up and sold in small plots. Rawle Farley writes,

> Henry Barkly stated before the Select Committee on the West India colonies (1842) that the greatest facility existed in British Guiana for Negroes who wished to get small plots of land. Despite heavy costs, Negroes were still buying Crown land for settlement until Government-devised financial measures made it prohibitive. Barkley pointed out that labourers did not purchase at all from the Government since Government restricted land selling to not less than 100 acres which had to be paid for at one pound an acre and involved very heavy fees..... Negroes therefore bought out individual proprietors (1954: 100).

The planters attempted to counter strike action by cutting off sources of food that had been available to workers on estates (e.g., cutting down coconut palms, see R.T. Smith 1962: 39), thus forcing ex-slaves to rely on wages in order to buy food. More importantly, the planters scoured the Globe for sources of indentured labour - i.e., labourers who would contract to work for five years at a fixed wage. Securing of indentured labourers insured five-year periods of relatively strike-free operation with nominal outlay for wages. It was the arrival of groups of indentured labourers from Madeira, China and East India during the 19th century that made Guyana the "Land of Six Peoples" (see Table III).

Planters lowered plantation wages and used their power in the Colonial Government to impose taxes upon workers to finance immigration.

By 1850, two-thirds of the ex-slaves had moved off the sugar plantations (Landis 1971: 29). Some writers attribute the movement of ex-slaves to abandonment of their occupational roles as unskilled

TABLE III

Arrival of Immigrants

Year	India	Madeira	Azores	West Indies	Africa	England	China	Cape de Verde	Malta	U.S.of America	Total
1835	-	429	-	157	-		-	-	-	-	586
1836	-	-	-	1,427	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,427
1837	-	-	-	2,150	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,150
1838	396	-	-	1,266	91	-	-	-	-	-	1,763
1839	-	-	-	192	-	-	-	-	208	-	400
1840	-	-	-	2,900	-	-	-	-	-	70	2,970
1841	-	4,297	-	2,745	1,102	-	-	-	-	-	8,144
1842	-	432	-	506	1,829	-	-	-	-	-	2,767
1843	-	45	-	180	325	-	-	-	-	-	550
1844	-	140	-	225	523	-	-	-	-	-	918
1845	816	668	-	722	1,425	-	-	-	-	-	3,631
1846	4,019	5,975	-	428	1,097	-	-	-	-	-	1,519
1847	3,461	3,761	-	-	565	-	-	-	-	-	7,787
1848	3,545	300	-	-	1,697	-	-	-	-	-	5,542
1849	-	86	-	-	111	-	-	-	-	-	197
1850	-	1,040	164	-	1,219	-	-	-	-	-	2,259
1851	517	1,101	-	-	453	21	-	-	-	-	2,256
1852	2,805	1,009	-	-	268	-	-	-	-	-	4,082
1853	2,021	2,539	-	-	276	-	647	-	-	-	5,483
1854	1,562	1,058	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,620
1855	2,342	1,055	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3,397
1856	1,258	180	-	-	65	-	-	766	-	-	2,269
1857	2,596	342	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,938
1858	1,404	1,484	-	-	281	-	-	53	-	-	3,222
1859	3,426	684	-	-	-	-	699	-	-	-	4,809
1860	5,450	135	-	-	625	-	1,942	-	-	-	8,152

TABLE III - Arrival of Immigrants (Continued)

Year	India	Madeira	Azores	West Indies	Africa	England	China	Cape de Verde	Malta	U.S.of America	Total
1861	3,737	35	-	-	40	-	3,368	-	-	-	7,180
1862	5,625	29	-	-	558	-	2,590	-	-	-	8,802
1863	2,354	-	-	69	373	-	396	-	-	-	3,192
1864	2,709	-	-	4,297	390	-	509	-	-	-	7,905
1865	3,216	118	-	2,482	42	-	1,691	-	-	-	7,549
1866	2,526	134	-	757	-	-	789	-	-	-	4,206
1867	3,909	304	-	365	-	-	-	-	-	-	4,568
1868	2,528	219	-	599	-	-	-	-	-	-	3,306
1869	7,168	240	-	980	-	-	-	-	-	-	8,388
1870	4,943	454	-	631	-	-	-	-	-	-	6,028
1871	2,706	260	-	591	-	-	-	-	-	-	3,557
1872	3,556	367	-	2,697	-	-	-	-	-	-	6,620
Jan.1-Jun.30, 1873	3,656	26	-	2,412	-	-	-	-	-	-	6,094
1873/74	8,301	208	-	1,692	-	-	388	-	-	-	10,589
1874/75	3,883	164	-	990	-	-	-	-	-	-	5,041
1875/76	3,834	100	-	414	-	-	-	-	-	-	4,348
1876/77	3,982	90	-	606	-	-	-	-	-	-	4,678
1877/78	8,118	203	-	1,066	-	-	-	-	-	-	9,387
1878/79	6,426	293	-	1,269	-	-	-	-	-	-	8,503
1879/80	4,506	243	-	527	-	-	-	-	-	-	5,276
1880/81	4,355	216	-	623	-	-	-	-	-	-	5,194
1881/82	3,166	182	-	326	-	-	-	-	-	-	3,674
1882/83	3,016	-	875	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3,891
1883/84	2,731	-	-	1,061	-	-	-	-	-	-	3,792
1884/85	6,209	-	-	1,123	-	-	-	-	-	-	7,332
1885/86	4,796	-	-	509	-	-	-	-	-	-	5,305
1886/87	3,928	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3,928

TABLE III - Arrival of Immigrants (Continued)

Year	India	Madeira	Azores	West Indies	Africa	England	China	Cape de Verde	Malta	U.S.of America	Total
1887/88	2,771	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,771
1888/89	3,573	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3,573
1889/90	3,432	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3,432
1890/91	5,229	-	-	267	-	-	-	-	-	-	5,496
1891/92	5,072	-	-	707	-	-	-	-	-	-	5,779
1892/93	4,693	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4,693
1893/94	5,932	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5,932
1894/95	7,114	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7,114
1895/96	1,882	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,882
1896/97	2,408	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,408
1897/98	1,202	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,202
1898/99	2,399	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,399
1899/00	4,961	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4,961
1900/01	3,801	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3,801
1901/02	4,245	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4,245
1902/03	1,947	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,947
1903/04	2,967	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,967
1904/05	1,314	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,314
1905/06	2,704	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,704
1906-07	2,257	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,257
1907/08	1,855	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,855
1908/09	1,799	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,799
1909/10	2,508	-	-	-	-	-	219	-	-	-	2,727
1910/11	2,173	-	-	-	-	-	236	-	-	-	2,409
1911/12	1,768	-	-	-	-	-	200	-	-	-	1,968
1912/13	2,206	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,206
1913/14	1,346	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,346
1914/15	819	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	819
1915/16	2,253	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,253

TABLE III - Arrival of Immigrants (Continued)

Year	India	Madeira	Azores	West Indies	Africa	England	China	Cape de Verde	Malta	U.S.of America	Total
1916/17	824	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	824
1918	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1919	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
1920	-	-	-	923	-	-	-	-	-	-	923
1921	274	-	-	136	-	-	-	-	-	-	410
1922	160	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	160
1923	-	-	-	369	-	-	-	-	-	-	369
1924	-	-	-	80	-	-	-	-	-	-	80
1925	-	-	-	85	-	-	-	-	-	-	85
1926	173	-	-	24	-	-	-	-	-	-	197
1927	-	-	-	40	-	-	-	-	-	-	40
1928	-	-	-	72	-	-	-	-	-	-	72
Total	239,756	30,685	164	42,512	13,355	21	14,189	819	208	70	341,599

(Source: Nath 1969:219-220)

The foregoing figures relate to persons introduced under contracts of service through the Immigration Department. They do not include persons arriving by ordinary passenger ships.

Immigration from India under the indenture system ceased in 1917, but batches of Indians who had returned to India were brought back at the expense of this Government in 1921, 1922 and 1926 as free settlers.

Immigration from Barbados ceased in 1928.

plantation labourers. This, in turn, is attributed to psychological factors - e.g., their association of emancipation with a life free of manual labour (Nath 1950: 3). It seems more likely, as Despres suggests (1967: 277), that many Afro-Guyanese permanently left the plantations after their wages had been reduced by the planters. Others who were involved in strikes were summarily ejected from estate land by planters (1975: 92).

These developments established a demographic pattern in Guyana which persists to the present day: the plantation population became predominantly Indo-Guyanese, while the urban population became predominantly Afro-Guyanese. (See Table IV).

TABLE IV

Africans and East Indians in Urban Population, 1891-1946

Period	Percentage of Africans in Urban Areas	Percentage of Indians in Urban Areas	African Proportion of Urban Population	Indian Proportion or Urban Population
1891	21	5	36	8
1911	28	6	42	11
1921	29	6	51	11
1931	34	7	54	12
1946	39	10	54	16

(Source: Despres 1975: 93)

Section 2 - Inter-Ethnic Relations in 1847-48

The first indentured labourers introduced into Guyana after emancipation were 396 "Hill Coolies", brought in 1838 to work on John Gladstone's plantation. They were to be "bound" by indenture contracts for five years, fed, housed, paid one shilling and fourpence per month, and finally returned to India. John Gladstone intended to import one East

Indian female for every three males, but only eleven women were included in the first shipment, a proportion that characterized most subsequent shipments. Of the original 396 immigrants, only 236 returned to India at the end of the indenture period. Sixty-two remained in the colony (some against their will), and ninety-eight died (Skinner 1955: 41). The high death rate caused a temporary cessation of immigration; however, between 1845 and 1847, 8,296 East Indians were imported. Many of these remained in Guyana after becoming indebted to planters.

There was periodic conflict between the Colonial Office/Colonial Administration and the planters over the question of whether the lion's share of the cost of immigration should be borne by the government, or the planters. In spite of public pressure to reduce or terminate immigration, or to at least compel planters to pay most of the cost of immigration, the planters were able to force the Colonial Office and successive Colonial Administrations to pay 2/3 or more of the cost of immigration (Adamson 1972: 197-99).

The introduction of large numbers of East Indian, Chinese and Portuguese indentured labourers meant different things to Guyana's whites, Blacks, and Coloureds. To the white planters, it meant that the Black labourers could no longer control the labour market. The attitude of the planters was epitomized by the remarks of the Marquis of Normandy to the Governor in August, 1839:

> "...scarcely any measure of public policy could be pursued in any country if the legislature were to sanction such measures as only are beneficial to all and detrimental to none. I therefore do not object to laws in favour of immigration purely on the ground that the effect of them being to reduce the rate of wages they operate advantageously to the class of capitalists only and disadvantageously to that far more numerous body who depend for their subsistence on the daily labour of their hands (PP 1906 LXXVII Col. 2822: 447).

The social, cultural, and economic factors which distinguished the 'highest circles' of Guyanese society - i.e., the ruling class - were both ascribed and achieved. While the Coloured population could match and surpass the educational and cultural attainments of the wealthiest white planters and their families, they could never match skin colour. However, the education and 'Englishification' of many members of the Coloured population distinguished them from most ex-slaves, and Coloureds were anxious to maintain such distinctions (Farley 1955b: 145). The ethnic boundary between Coloureds and Blacks was drawn in terms of ruling class criteria - viz., the alleged superiority of 'English' culture and the alleged superiority of 'whiteness' in skin colour. Insofar as Coloureds were often more 'Englishified' than Blacks, Coloureds often saw themselves as superior to Blacks. The Blacks, in turn, often despised the Coloureds for what they saw as the Coloureds' pretentious flaunting of 'English' culture - e.g., clothes, speech, manners, etc. In light of this tendency, it is not surprising that the reaction of the Coloured population to East Indian immigration focused largely on the immigrants' lack of 'proper' English culture. There was concern that the example of 'pagan' East Indians would lead newly-converted Blacks away from Christianity; there was concern that the disproportionate number of East Indian males and the resultant deleterious effect on East Indian family life would not foster 'proper' family life among Black labourers; there was concern that 'sensual idolatrous' East Indians would dress 'indecently', act 'immorally', and thus adversely affect the morals of the Black labourers (PP 1846 XXX: 32; 166). However, there was also some concern with the welfare of the newcomers, and an awareness that competition for jobs between East

Indian and Creole* labourers could lead to conflict. Anglican clergymen and Methodist missionaries sometimes voiced the concerns of their Coloured parishoners when they wrote that the "helpless strangers, speaking a foreign tongue", would be ill-treated by the planters, just as the Blacks had been ill-treated during slave times (Dalton 1855: 411; PP 1845 XXXI: 174).

The reaction of Black villagers and plantation labourers to East Indian immigration is hard to determine, largely because villagers often lacked literate representation. However, there is evidence that their concerns involved economic issues. Several groups of villagers petitioned the Governor in protest when they were forced to pay taxes which financed immigration. Villagers soon came to realize that immigration was being used by the planters to break their control of the labour market (PP 1846 XXX: 32). Mr. Miles, a Trinidad planter, gave the following testimony before the Parliamentary Select Committee on Sugar and Coffee in 1848:

> I think that if the Negroes knew that .... every planter had the power of introducing a certain number of immigrants every year, and if they actually saw them come for one or two years, it would produce a very great effect on them (PP 1848 XXIII, pt. 2: 246).

Such an effect was described by Guyana's Governor Light in a despatch to the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Gladstone, in 1846:

> ....while there was a great deficiency of hands, the Creole population could command the labour market; they refused work they did not like, and were often irregular in their labour.

---

* Creoles were people who had been born and raised in Guyana. The term was usually used to refer to the children of African slaves - i.e., Blacks.

> The introduction of emigrants arrested this; the Creole population have seen that strangers are ready to perform work, and with regularity, which employers had difficulty in obtaining previous to the arrival of the strangers. The former, viz., the Creoles, now have to compete with the latter; and therefore are not only less irregular in their hours of labour, but eager to obtain it (PP 1848 XXIII, pt. 2: 247-248).

In spite of these conditions, Black plantation labourers and villagers initially welcomed East Indian labourers. Carbery, a Magistrate who observed the initial contacts between Afro-Guyanese and East Indians, wrote,

> Contrary to my expectations the Coolies were in every instance welcomed by the Negro population of the estates with great cordiality; they rightly considered them as assistants.....and no jealousy of competition arose in their minds.....(the East Indians) have been employed almost exclusively since their arrival in weeding, a description of work for which Creole labourers are very averse.....(PP 1842 XXIX: 25).

Ruhomon remarks that the Blacks initially regarded East Indians sympathetically, "in no other light than as the victims of a new slavery" (1947: 25). There were many instances of marriage and/or cohabitation between East Indian males and Black females.

Section 3 - The Strike of 1847-48

Such were the conditions when a serious economic crisis occurred in Guyana in 1847. The crisis resulted from a financial panic in London, the end of price support for British West Indian sugar, and the failure of several prominent West Indian merchant houses in London. Black labourers began to fear that their money would soon be worthless, and demanded silver for their currency from Georgetown banks (Young 1958: 19-20). The planters were faced with a situation where returns on the sale of sugar were below the costs of production, (see Table V), and where credit was not readily available. Their immediate reaction

TABLE V

SUGAR

Prices Obtained for Sugar Exported

Year	Price per Ton		Year	Price per Ton	
1795	46.50	46.10	1879	22.20	22. 4
1800	40.45	40. 9	1880	22.30	22. 6
1805	34.50	34.10	1881	21.85	21.17
1810	37.45	37. 9	1882	20.85	20.17
1815	59.85	59.17	1883	22.20	22. 4
1820	33.90	33.18	1884	14.55	14.11
1825	34.60	34.12	1885	14.40	14. 8
1829	18.00	18. 0	1886	14.05	13. 1
1831	23.65	23.13	1887	13.35	13. 7
1832	27.65	27.13	1888	14.85	14.17
1833	29.65	29.13	1889	16.55	16.11
1834	29.40	29. 8	1890	13.60	13.12
1835	33.65	33.13	1891	14.20	14. 4
1836	40.80	40.16	1st Jan. to		
1837	34.60	34.12	31st of Mar.	11.10	11. 2
1838	33.65	33.13	1892		
1839	39.15	39. 3	1892-93	13.40	13. 8
1840	49.10	49. 2	1893-94	14.55	14.11
1841	39.65	39.13	1894-95	12.15	12. 3
1842	36.95	36.19	1895-96	10.35	10. 7
1843	33.75	33.15	1896	9.60	9.12
1844	33.65	33.13	1913	12.60	12.12
1845	32.55	32.11	1914	14.70	14.14
1846	34.40	34. 8	1915	21.30	21. 6
1847	28.25	28. 5	1916	20.65	20.13
1872	24.45	24. 9	1917	21.30	21. 6
1873	18.90	18.18	1918	22.00	22. 0
1874	22.20	22. 4	1919	29.80	29.16
1875	19.75	19.15	1920	50.05	50. 1
1876	22.35	22. 7	1921	18.45	18. 9
1877	23.85	23.17	1922	16.50	16.10
1878	22.95	22.19	1923	25.65	25.13

(Source: Nath 1969: 250)

was to cut wages by 25%*. A contemporary account by Dalton states,

> ....when it was proposed to the labourers,that in consequence of the altered circumstances of the colony a reduction of 25 percent was to be made in the wages to be paid them, they one and all refused to agree to it, in spite of the counsel and advice of magistrates, ministers, and others. From the month of December a strike commenced, and continued for several months. The opposition manifested by the Creole labourers was communicated to the immigrants, both Portuguese and Coolies, and persuasion added to example kept them for some time in idleness and discontent. But the same necessity which had compelled the white man to submit to these changes, forced also the Portuguese to continue his toil at any price sooner than subject himself to want and poverty. The immigrants in general returned to their work, but the independent Creole, removed beyond want and necessity, could afford to stay at home with his hands crossed (1855: 25-26; see also Webber 1931: 217-218).

At first, the indentured labourers, both Portuguese and East Indian, joined the ex-slaves in withholding labour-power. The nature of the strikers' organization and communication in the face of cultural and linguistic differences is not known. However, if the Black labourers had intimidated the indentured labourers into joining the work stoppage, Dalton, whose work is often racist in character, would most likely have written about it.

Portuguese and East Indian indentured labourers broke the strike by returning to work, and the Creoles then began to burn cane fields, attack East Indian strikebreakers, and burn their homes (Skinner 1955: 60-61; Adamson 1972: 157-159). Such attacks and intimidation continued sporadically for many years (Skinner 1960: 904; Simms 1966: 57).

The violence between indentured East Indian and Creole labourers after the 1847-48 strike is sometimes seen as a prelude to the antagonism

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* See Appendix II for wages and prices in the 1840's.

between East Indians and Afro-Guyanese which allegedly characterized all of Guyanese social history (see Simms 1966: 57-59). However, such an interpretation is one-sided. It overlooks three central facts: (1) at first, the indentured labourers left the fields with the Creoles, an action which can be interpreted as an instance of concerted action, if not cooperation between members of different ethnic sections in the working class; (2) the planters could levy harsh punishments upon the striking immigrants for 'breaking' their indenture contracts, while they had no such power over the Creoles. For example, according to Ordnance Number 21, East Indian indentured labourers forfeited their wages and were required to pay twenty-four cents for every day away from work (Adamson 1972: 54); and, (3) the indentured labourers could be starved into submission since they had to depend upon the planters for subsistence goods while the Creole strikers could often raise subsistence goods on the land that they owned. The Berbice Gazette of February 10, 1848, wrote,

> The great abundence of native provisions, and their high price in consequence of the scarcity of imported bread stuffs, put it in the power of the creole labourers, who all have lands of their own, and are almost the sole vendors, to resist for a time any attempt to reduce their wages on plantations.....
>
> The African Immigrants, and others who have no land of their own, were the last to discontinue (the) strike, and will be the first to resume labour. They can only hold out until their savings are expended, and as "acquisitiveness".....is a prominent characteristic of the African race, they will encroach upon their hoard with great reluctance.

These factors were clearly related to planter and government policies which 'allowed' land to Creoles but not to indentured labourers, and which permitted sanctions against indentured labourers but not against Creoles. Thus, in an important sense, differential allocation of economic benefits and burdens to subordinated ethnic groups created the

conditions which allowed the Creoles to stay on strike, and which compelled the indentured labourers to return to work. And it was the latter act which precipitated Creole attacks upon East Indians.

Section 4 - Ruling Class Racial Stereotypes

It seems certain that the initial cordiality between Blacks and indentured labourers gave way to ethnic boundaries and conflict in the aftermath of the 1847-48 strike. And while there are insufficient data to determine the physical and/or cultural features that each group used to define itself and others after 1847-48, it seems very likely, in light of data from later periods regarding inter-ethnic relations, that indentured labourers, to a large extent, took over the racial stereotypes held by the ruling class. In the case of East Indians, this process may have been facilitated by reinterpretation of the caste system in such a way that Blacks were seen as belonging to the "lowest or most degraded caste, not to be associated with" - i.e., 'chamars', or 'pariahs' (Moore 1977: 106). Blacks may have been identified as the demons ('rakshas') from the Ramayana who were 'blackened' by flames when they tried to set fire to the tail of the monkey-deity, Hanuman (see Ryan 1972: 21-22). These racist interpretations of Hindu sacred texts could have led East Indians to see contact with Blacks as 'polluting' (see Moore 1977: 106), and may have become widespread in the ethnic conflict generated by the failure of the strike of 1847-48. However, they are almost totally absent in contemporary Guyana.

Examples of ruling class racial stereotypes abound in the writings of planters, government officials, and clergy. The following quotations from a prominent clergyman are typical examples which will be quoted at length so that the reader will have a clear idea of the racist ideology

that pervaded ruling class thinking.

The Rev. J.G. Pearson, in a caricature of "The East Indian", wrote,

> ....Luchman's idea of getting rich is to keep and conserve what he gets, while that of the majority of others consists rather in the ambition and effort to get more. Luchman is not merely thrifty, he is absolutely mean. He has not been two years away from India, whence he came a veritable pauper, and yet he owns a cow and has something towards another hidden beneath the ground....or maybe in the Government Bank.
>
> Young as he [i.e., Luchman's baby] is the characteristics of race show themselves in him and what others get noisily and with much strife he secures by craft.
>
> His parents frequently talk of returning to India , but .....as time slips by, and another and yet another cow is added to those for which his father pays agistment (sic.) fees, and still more gold coins adorn his mother's breast.....
>
> The black boys are no match for him at marbles, cricket, and other games in subtlety or skill but they have twice the staying power.
>
> .....he must spend something for food and other necessities and it is seldom with all his haggling that he scores off John Chinaman [i.e., the Chinese shopkeeper].
>
> ....Rampersaud sets to and earns enough to lay by thirty percent of his wages toward another cow....(1897: 138-143).

In another article on "The Negro in the West Indies", the Rev. Pearson wrote,

> The blacks exported from Africa to till the sugar plantations were barbarians. Nothing but the wildest flight of poetical imagination could represent their Africa homes as peaceful or happy. No well built towns, or national monuments of science, art, or religion, ever excited pride in their race. History and tradition they had none ....Religion combined grovelling fatuity with inhuman cruelty....
>
> .....the condition of the average slave in the West Indies was far above that of the average negro at home in Africa ....
>
> Slavery brought him into contact with new and to him as yet unknown phases of life, as order, law, safety, labour

> and the reflection of....a pure religion - a religion which actually broke his shackles....All this was to him as the regimen of school to the boy.
>
> In every negro there is possibly an organ of industry, or whatever equivalent phrenologists locate in the brain for it, though one is sorely tempted to doubt it sometimes; but the artificial position in which we have now placed him relieves him of the necessity of cultivating that virtue [i.e., emancipation].
>
> [After 'failing' at cooperative farming]....he is relieved of the restraints of his former environment [i.e., slavery], he sinks into apathetic indifference to the claims of manhood and has only to be left alone long enough to reduce him to the condition of his naked, red-rage fetish-worshipping ancestor.
>
> ....can heredity be cut off by an act of parliament? (1894: 243-49; see also Rodway 1895: 243; MacRae 1856: 9, Payne 1971: 67).

While the foregoing citations do not come from the period of the 1847-48 strike, it seems very likely that the racial stereotypes they express were present among planters and government officials in 1847-48. In any case, these are the racial stereotypes that members of the subordinated ethnic groups came to use in characterizing each other. The greed and miserliness that whites saw in East Indians came to be seen by East Indians themselves as the positive virtues of thrift and industriousness. At the same time, East Indians learned to use all the negative features in the ruling class stereotype of "the Negro". Similarly, the irrational propensity to spend beyond one's means, without thought of the future, that whites saw in Blacks came to be seen by Blacks themselves as Christian generosity and neighbourliness. At the same time, Blacks learned to use all the negative features in the ruling class stereotypes of "The Coolie" and "The Potagee" (i.e., Portuguese). Meanwhile, as the quotations above indicate, members of the white ruling class held negative racial stereotypes of both Blacks

and East Indians, and Portuguese as well (see Schomburgk 1922: 25). It seems likely that, during the period of bitterness between Blacks and indentured labourers following the failure of the 1847-48 strike, ethnic boundaries between Blacks, East Indians, and Portuguese, based upon ruling class racial stereotypes, emerged. Also, ethnic solidarity probably assumed a defensive function in the aftermath of Black attacks upon indentured labourers.

The racial stereotypes outlined above were probably used by Black Creoles to 'explain' the failure of the strike - i.e., they may have felt that "the Coolies" and the Portuguese were "naturally" so greedy that they went back to work for a low wage rather than maintain solidarity. This is the sort of 'explanation' for failure of industrial action that became common throughout the last century of Guyanese colonial history.

Section 5 - The Rise of the Portuguese Petit Bourgeoisie

By the time of the strike of 1847-48, small shops owned by Portuguese were spread throughout most of the areas inhabited by Blacks. According to a report on the medical conditions of immigrants, 5,853 Portuguese, 3,429 "Calcutta Coolies", 2,736 "Madras Coolies", and 4,319 African immigrants were working on plantations in October, 1847 (CO 111/250). At the same time, there were 229 Portuguese hucksters and shopkeepers in Berbice, and 1,020 Portuguese hucksters and shopkeepers in Demerara (CO 111/250). One of the reasons that Portuguese were able to enter the retail trade in large numbers is that the planters and colonial government allowed them to have shorter indenture periods (i.e., two years) than East Indians and Africans (Moore 1975: 5). Moore points out that maximization and capitalism were part of the Portuguese culture

in Madeira, but were largely absent in East Indian society and Guyanese slave society (1975: 7). Portuguese often saw the retail trade as a means toward upward social mobility while Creoles usually did not. Although a group of Creole hucksters and retail merchants emerged after emancipation, they were less willing to bear the loss of profits involved in price wars than were their Portuguese competitors (Moore 1975: 8). However, as Moore suggests, the success of the Portuguese retailers was mainly due to several ruling class policies. Ruling class wholesalers and merchants extended credit to many Portuguese retailers while withholding credit from Creoles and Coloured. This enabled Portuguese to use cash to purchase huckstering licenses more easily than Blacks or Coloureds. Apparently, the Colonial Government lowered the prices of these licenses in order to facilitate the entry of Portuguese into the retail trade (Moore 1975: 8). A.R.F. Webber wrote that the Portuguese

> cornered with ready cash every supply of vegetables as soon as it was offered at the market by the farmers.... (cited in Payne 1971: 36).

And Tommy Payne, the National Archivist of Guyana, writes that

> .....the plantocracy refused to buy produce from the Afro-Guyanese who were therefore forced to sell to the Portuguese at an undervalued price.....(1971: 37).

The profits of the Portuguese retailers were high, partly because of the system of coinage in the colony. During slave times, there were very few small retail outlets. Plantation owners and managers purchased supplies in bulk from wholesalers (Dalton 1855 Vol. 1: 463). The smallest price increase was never less than a half-bitt. These circumstances, the Creoles often claimed, promoted extravagance (Dalton 1855 Vol.1: 463). In addition, mark-ups were high, and profits well over 100% were

not uncommon (Moore 1975: 11).

There is also evidence that many Portuguese retailers systematically cheated Blacks. Moore notes that Portuguese retailers were sometimes charged with using false weights and false-bottomed measures (1975: 11). In September, 1855, The Colonist, a pro-planter newspaper, urged the government not to prosecute Portuguese shopkeepers too harshly for using false weights. The Colonist regarded the immigration of Portuguese 'whites' as desirable, and was afraid that prosecution of Portuguese shopkeepers might lead them to return to Madeira.

The business practices that Portuguese retailers used in dealing with Black strikers in 1847-1848 are noteworthy insofar as they contribute to the failure of the strike. Moore writes,

> .....the retailers refused to allow credit to the strikers who were earning no wages and maintained prices at a high level. This combined with the financial crisis of 1847-1849 caused the Creoles, considerable hardships. A squeeze on credit led the Creoles, who had saved money in bank notes, to rush to the banks in Georgetown to convert their notes into specie which the banks refused to do. They were thus forced to sell their notes to Portuguese shopkeepers during the strike at twenty percent below par, only to find a few weeks later that the governor had restored confidence in the banking system by depositing $50,000 in the banks (1975: 12).

Thus, it was not surprising that after the strike, the bitterness of Creole strikers was not only focused on East Indian indentured labourers; it was also focused on Portuguese shopkeepers. Even before the strike, Blacks had attacked Portuguese shops (Rodway 1895, Vol. III: 112-114). After the strike of 1847-1848, there were further Creole attacks on Portuguese shops. According to the Berbice Gazette of March 20, 1848, crowds of Blacks attacked Portuguese shops in Georgetown, and three Portuguese shops were attacked in Berbice. At plantation

Highbury, the proprietor sent indentured African immigrants to protect the local Portuguese shop from attack by Creoles. The relations that existed between Creoles and Portuguese retailers are characterized by Dalton, whose sentiments are quite obvious:

> Their example and conduct [i.e., of the Portuguese] have not been unproductive of good to the Creole negro, in whom have been excited feelings of emulation and rivalry...
>
> Secure in his own self-conceit, the negro affects to despise the mercenary and hardworking Portuguese; he taunts him with the appellation of "white nigger", and pretends to be his superior in education and good breeding; indeed, it is not an uncommon thing to hear the Portuguese address the negroes as Sir, Ma'am, and the terms of black lady, black gentlemen, are commonly made use of by them (1855 Vol. 1: 466-467).

Almost needless to say, writers such as Rodway and Dalton did not emphasize the crucial role of the ruling class in establishing the Portuguese petit bourgeoisie.

The most notable incident between Blacks and Portuguese was the "Angel Gabriel Riot" of 1856. John Sayers Orr (the "Angel Gabriel") was a Guyanese-born Coloured preacher who had been deported from Scotland and the U.S. for the public disturbances caused by his anti-Catholic orations. Orr's speeches drew large Black and Coloured audiences outside Stabroek Market in Georgetown. He combined anti-Catholicism (e.g., allegations that the Pope was the Devil incarnate and thinly-masked allusions regarding sexual license between priests and nuns) with allegations that the Portuguese retailers were exploiting the Creoles, and ought to be sent back to Madeira (Moore 1975: 13). When the Colonial Government attempted to imprison Orr on a trivial charge, Blacks in Georgetown rioted and caused over $250,000 worth of damage to Portuguese shops. On plantations, East Indians sometimes joined Blacks in looting and burning Portuguese shops; in other cases, East Indians

helped to defend Portuguese property. When Black constables refused to stop the rioters, 200 men from the West India regiment were rushed to Guyana and the rioters were dispersed without bloodshed (Chan 1970: 45). Further burning and looting of Portuguese shops by Indo- and Afro-Guyanese occurred in 1898.

Section 6 - The Strike and 'Riots' of 1905

The consequences of the failure of the strike of 1847-48 were most severe for the Black labourers who had held out the longest. It was at this point that most of them were forced by the planters to migrate from plantations to the villages. But while the number of indentured immigrants in Guyana was sufficient to break the strike of 1847-48, it had not yet reached the point where the planters had absolute control of the labour market. Wages returned to their pre-strike level in 1849, although the intensity of labour was increased, thus negating, to some degree, this upward trend (Adamson 1972: 191-192).

One of the effects of the extensive consolidation and rationalization of plantation agriculture which occurred in the late 19th and early 20th centuries was a displacement of labour (Adamson 1972: 191-192). This process, coupled with continuing East Indian immigration, finally insured the planters of complete control of the labour market.

By 1884, most of the merchants in the ruling class had come to oppose continued immigration because they felt that most East Indian immigrants, unlike Creoles, saved their earnings instead of spending them. Merchants also pressed for lower import duties and more political power in the Colonial Government (Adamson 1972: 191-192). And while Governor Irving reduced some duties on consumer goods, and some taxes upon the

working population in 1883, the planters had sufficient influence to insure that immigration continued.

Between 1900 and 1904, 14,274 East Indian indentured labourers were introduced (see Table III), and as early as 1884, the supply of 'free' labour was "so abundant that the market rate fell below the statutory rate for indentured immigrants" (Adamson 1972: 194). At the same time, the price of sugar had fallen drastically because of the introduction of government-subsidized beet sugar production in Western Europe. The price of sugar fell from £21.85 per ton in 1881 to 12.15 per ton in 1894-95. In 1896, it reached a record low of £9.60 (see Table V). The entire Guyanese economy faltered. Consequently, between 1894 and 1897, a wage reduction of 20-25% was forced upon workers by a combination of rate-cutting and speed-up (Adamson 1972: 194). These measures were applied to urban workers (e.g., waterfront workers, electricity workers, clerks, etc.), as well as plantation labourers, and provided the context of a serious "labour disturbance" in 1905.

The strike began on November 28, 1905, when the Georgetown dock workers and other casual waterfront workers stopped work. According to Vere T. Daly,

> A working day of 10-1/2 hours, in which overtime was ignored, a wage of 48¢ per day for truckers and 64¢ for sugar packers, and the fact that a worker could be discharged with just 1/2 day's pay - all combined to make the men dissatisfied.....this was the first strike in Georgetown, and it aroused a tremendous amount of interest (1966: 307-308).

On December 1, Afro-Guyanese plantation workers at plantation Ruimveldt, located approximately 5 miles east of Georgetown near Diamond estate, went on strike and persuaded some East Indian estate workers to join them (Daly 1966: 308). Planters and colonial authorities

saw in this event the realization of their worst fears:"a combination" of Afro- and Indo-Guyanese workers in a struggle against the planters. This concern was reflected in a report on the disturbance from the Governor, Sir F. M. Hodgson, to the Colonial Secretary, the Early of Elgin:

> The strikes that had occurred in Georgetown had had their effect upon the negro labourers on the sugar estates adjacent to the town. These labourers are employed as cane cutters and otherwise on every estate in the colony, and therefore it was necessary to recognise that if the movement were not promptly checked upon the estates in question, the probability was that it would spread throughout the colony.
>
> Further, and this point is one of importance, and not to be left out of account, the East Indian immigrant is equally as interested as other labourers in any demand for higher wages, and might, and probably would, if he saw that concessions were being made, have to be reckoned with (PP 1906, Vol. LXXVII: 332).

On December 2, police constables were dispatched to Ruimveldt in order to deal with the "disturbance", and opened fire on a predominantly Afro-Guyanese crowd of strikers, wounding some and killing others. Most of the Black constables and white officers who fired on the strikers were from the islands of the British West Indies. Their role in suppressing strikes of East Indian plantation labourers (e.g., at plantation Leonora in 1869, at Devonshire Castle in 1872-73, and at Plantation Friends in 1903) had led to animosity between East Indians and Blacks in these areas (Jenkins 1871: 101-103).

After they had killed and wounded several strikers with gunfire, the police loaded four wounded workers on a cart and drove it to the Georgetown Hospital, presumably to 'serve as an example' which would calm the crowd (Chase 1964: 21).

The response of Georgetown strikers and unemployed Blacks upon

seeing the non-white wounded was immediate: they rioted against whites and attacked symbols of ruling class power, e.g., planters' and merchants' houses, and the House of Assembly. The crowds were especially concerned about who was responsible for the shootings. Between six and seven hundred Blacks pulled a cart bearing the bodies of the dead to Governor Hodgson's residence and demanded to know whether or not he had ordered the shootings (PP 1906: Vol. LXXVII: 286). Others held Colonel Lushington, the Inspector-General of Police, responsible, and began to chant, "Kill Lushington!" (Daly 1966: 307). Two large pawn shops, one owned by a Portuguese and the other by an Englishman, were looted, and carriages carrying white people were chased by angry crowds. Several whites were beaten in the streets. Other crowds attempted to storm the Public Buildings, the houses of Magistrates, and the Telephone Exchange (Chase 1964: 20-27).

The response of the authorities was swift. Two gunboats, H.M.S. "Diamond" and H.M.S. "Sappho" were called in, and arrived on December 3. Their contingents of marines were sent to strategic points in the Georgetown area. Also, the Governor called out the Militia, which consisted largely of Coloured shop clerks, Coloured professionals, and Coloured government employees. However, over 100 Coloured Militiamen failed to report for duty, and were later punished (PP 1906, Vol. LXXVII: 280, 287). In Georgetown, at least two more Blacks were shot and killed by police, and others were flogged with the "cat-o'-nine-tails". Authorities also ordered the shaving of heads of many women who had been arrested. By December 7, 84 arrests had been made in Georgetown, and by December 11, 58 policemen had been injured and one killed (PP 1906, Vol. LXXVLL: 282, 283, 307).

On December 4, 1905, the Governor assembled a deputation of prominent Georgetown employers who made some concessions to the waterfront workers. In the meantime, work stoppages, sometimes involving concerted action by Indo- and Afro-Guyanese, continued on the estates (see Key 1972), and Governor Hodgson threatened to withdraw Government support from the few planters who were willing to make concessions to the strikers (PP 1906, Vol. LXXVII: 305). Eventually, the sugar workers returned to their jobs without having gained any of their demands.

A petition for a Royal Commission inquiry into the 1905 'disturbances' was drawn up by two Coloured lawyers, A.B. Brown and Patrick Dargan, and by a Portuguese, M.R. Gonslaves, and signed by at least 5,000 Blacks and Coloureds. Among other things, the petition demanded an end to East Indian immigration and mentioned the fact that the large numbers of East Indian labourers, imported with taxes partially raised from Blacks, kept Black plantation workers from receiving a fair remuneration for their labour. The petitioners attributed blame for this situation to planters, and to alleged 'racial' characteristics of East Indians - viz., "he [i.e., the East Indian] is...of a miserly disposition, and saves the greater portion of [his] earnings...."(PP 1906, Vol. LXXVII: 450, 453).

During this period, East Indian resentment of Blacks was probably building around other issues. It seems likely that intimidation of East Indians by Black strikers (Adamson 1972: 157-58), refusal of Blacks to join East Indian strikes, suppression of East Indian strikes by the Black constabulary, and barring of East Indians from educational opportunities that were open to Blacks (Skinner 1955: 68-69), led East Indian workers to look to their own ethnic community as a means of

defense and security. Such a response must have hardened ethnic boundaries between Afro- and Indo-Guyanese, and negated the possibilities of cooperation between them in struggles against the ruling class. It was not long before East Indians were using ruling class stereotypes of Blacks to justify allocation of agricultural Crown land exclusively to East Indians.

The disproportionate allocation of agricultural land by the ruling class also inhibited unity between Indo- and Afro-Guyanese workers. East Indians whose indenture contracts had expired were usually offered agricultural land by the Colonial Government in lieu of return passage to India. Blacks were sometimes excluded from Government land settlement schemes for East Indians. Practically all plantations offered land to East Indians at low rents to attract East Indian plantation labour (see Table VI), and rural magistrates often reported that East Indians preferred to reap rice on their plots rather than assist in the sugar harvest (PP LXXVII Cd. 2822: 358). At the same time, the planter-dominated Colonial Government pursued policies aimed at wrecking cooperatives established by ex-slaves, thus making them dependent upon plantation labour. The Government refused to provide adequate drainage, and passed legislation which rendered the continuity of cooperative land-tenure impossible (Adamson 1972: 57-60; Farley 1953).

Section 7 - Inter-Ethnic Relations and Ruling Class Policy, 1847-1905

The events described in this chapter illustrate a recurring relationship between ruling class policy and inter-ethnic conflict and cooperation in Guyanese colonial history. When economic crises compelled the ruling class to temporarily abandon policies of

TABLE VI

Rice cultivation by East Indians on Sugar Estates, 1905-1906 from Administrative - Report of the Immigration Agent-General, 1905-1906

Estate	Indentured E.I.'s	'Free' E.I.'s	Number of Acres	Rent per Acre
Skeldon	30	170	180	$1.00
Springland				
Port Mourant	50	2,000	712	$3-4
Lochaber		64	44	
Albion	460	650	550	
Rose Hall	250	500	466	$4.00
Adelphi	30	106	120	.50
Providence	45	180	200	$3.00
Friends	120	200	80	
Mara	20	54	149	$1.00
Ma Retraite	4	96	108	
Blairmont	52	160	85	
Bath	30	280	210	
Highbury				
Overton	140	50		
Vriesland		16	10	
Wales				
Nismes				
Schoon Ord				
Versailles				
Vreed-en Hoop	9	99	34	$1.50
Windsor Forest	70	1,338	800	$1.50
Cornelia Ida	25	332	228	$2.40
Leonora	100	200		$4.00
Uitvlugt				
DeKinderen	50	250	298	$3.00
Tuschen de Vrienden		400	140	$3.00
Vergenoegen	24	350	200	$ .72
Hampton Court	44	144	60	$3.00
Golden Fleece	46	490	20	$8.00
Taymouth Manor	66	268	113	$1.00
Anna Regina	25	380	127	$3.84
Marionville	40	100	61	Free

Many more acres off the estates were under rice cultivation (CO 114/112: 290).

disproportionate allocation in favour of the uniform imposition of economic burdens upon all workers, Afro-Guyanese, Indo-Guyanese, and Portuguese workers engaged in concerted resistance. The 20-25% wage reductions which precipitated the strikes of 1847-48 and 1905 illustrate this process. At the same time, ruling class policies of disproportionate allocation divided the workers. In the strike of 1847-48, indentured Portuguese and East Indians broke the strike because they were subject to ruling class sanctions that were not applied to Blacks. Portuguese immigrants (and probably East Indians) were given opportunities to succeed in the retail trade that were denied to Blacks, and Indo-Guyanese were given access to agricultural Crown land that was denied to Blacks. The social and economic disparities created by these policies of disproportionate allocation were often 'explained' by Portuguese, Blacks, and East Indians in terms of ruling class racial stereotypes. For example, Indo-Guyanese could 'explain' their success at rice farming and Portuguese could 'explain' their success at retailing in terms of the ruling class notion that degrees of 'whiteness' correlated with moral, intellectual, and entrepreneurial qualities. The idea of Black inferiority followed from this 'principle', and was accepted, in varying degrees, by many Portuguese and Indo-Guyanese. Blacks also used the ruling class stereotype of Indo-Guyanese and Portuguese as 'miserly', 'exploitative', and 'mercenary' to 'explain' the success of the latter groups at retailing and rice farming. Blacks contrasted these qualities with the Christian generosity and refusal to exploit each other that they saw in themselves. In the ruling class stereotype of Blacks, these qualities were seen as lack of initiative and economic irrationality. The adoption of these ruling class

stereotypes was facilitated by their constant repetition by clergy and newspapers. And the acceptance of ruling class racial stereotypes by workers promoted the growth of ethnic boundaries and conflict, and inhibited cooperation in industrial and political struggles against the ruling class - i.e., it served to 'divide-and-rule'.

Yet it is doubtful that the ruling class policies of differential allocation which served as the basis for these ideological tendencies were consciously devised by the ruling class in order to 'divide-and-rule'. The ruling class notion of Black inferiority had taken root in the struggle against abolitionism, long before emancipation. It dictated that Portuguese and East Indian immigrants were 'superior' to Blacks on the basis of skin colour alone. Thus, it is not surprising that the ruling class provided economic opportunities for Portuguese and East Indians (e.g., credit and access to agricultural land) that were denied to Blacks. However, no matter what their motivation, ruling class policies of disproportionate allocation promoted ethnic boundaries and conflict between workers, and diverted their attention from the ruling class monopolization of wealth and power which perpetuated the social order. Thus, ruling class policies served to 'divide-and-rule' even if they were not consciously intended to do so.

The foregoing analysis has shown how contradictory tendencies toward cooperation and conflict among ethnic groups in the working class were related to ruling class policy from 1847 to 1905. The next chapters will show that these contradictory tendencies coexisted throughout the remainder of Guyanese colonial history.

CHAPTER V

CLASS, ETHNICITY, AND THE STRIKE OF 1924

Introduction

In this chapter, it will be shown that the strike of 1924, and the events which followed, conform to the model of conflict and cooperation between subordinated ethnic groups outlined in Chapter II. The post-war economic crisis which swept the capitalist world in the 1920's affected Guyana seriously. It produced a rise in prices, and led the Guyanese ruling class to drastically cut wages for workers in all subordinated ethnic groups. In these conditions, Afro- and Indo-Guyanese workers began to cooperate in the formation of Guyana's first trade union. And, in 1924, Indo- and Afro-Guyanese workers joined in a strike which brought the sugar industry and commerce to a standstill. At the same time, there was a tendency toward conflict between subordinated ethnic groups as Indo-Guyanese used ruling class racial stereotypes of Blacks in arguing that Afro-Guyanese should be excluded from government agricultural schemes, and as Afro-Guyanese used ruling class racial stereotypes of East Indians to "explain" the persistence of low plantation wages, and the increasing success of Indo-Guyanese rice farmers and retailers. Yet as we have seen in the previous chapter, all of these developments were a direct result of ruling class policy. Plantation wages were low because the ruling class maintained an overabundance of labour by continuing to import East Indian indentured labourers, even during times of economic crisis. And the success of Indo-Guyanese in rice farming and the retail trade (as opposed to the "failure" of Blacks in these enterprises) was a result of the ruling class policy of

excluding Blacks from government land settlement schemes (which were exclusively for East Indians), and of denying significant amounts of credit to Black or Coloured retailers. Such differential allocation of economic benefits and burdens to different subordinated ethnic groups was justified by the ruling class in terms of racist ideology. When subordinated ethnic groups also used ruling class racial stereotypes to "explain" their relative social and economic positions, it hardened pre-existing ethnic boundaries between them, and diverted their attention from the fact that their respective social and economic successes and failures were almost exclusively attributable to ruling class policies (especially differential allocation). This use of ruling class racist ideology by Indo- and Afro-Guyanese workers stimulated conflict between them, and inhibited cooperation between them in political and industrial struggles against the ruling class. Thus, as in previous periods of Guyanese social history, contradictory tendencies toward conflict and cooperation between subordinated ethnic groups cannot be understood without reference to the policies and practices of the ruling class, and to ongoing class struggle.

Section 1 - The Emergence of the British Guiana Labour Union

Between the "riots" of 1905 and 1924, two significant changes occurred in Guyanese society. First, a strong trade union movement emerged, and second, a serious economic crisis developed. Mr. Hubert N. Critchlow, a Coloured Bookers' dock labourer, emerged as one of the leaders of the informal organizations created by waterfront workers during a series of strikes between 1905 and 1918. In January, 1918, Critchlow and two other employees of Bookers petitioned the Chamber of

Commerce for an 8-hour day. Mr. A. Sherlock, the President of the Chamber of Commerce and the Managing Director of Bookers, gave Critchlow and other signatories three days to withdraw their petition. It was made clear that failure to comply with Sherlock's order would result in loss of employment and blacklisting. In the face of this threat, the other signatories withdrew; however, Critchlow refused and was duly fired and blacklisted. After this, Critchlow devoted all his time to organizing Guyana's first trade union, the British Guiana Labour Union (BGLU), which was officially founded on January 11, 1919. In spite of internal wrangling and financial mismanagement, the BGLU proved to be very popular among Afro-Guyanese workers, and by the end of its first year, about 7,000 had joined. These included waterfront workers, porters, labourers, tradesmen, sea defence and road workers, railway employees, balata bleeders, miners, factory workers, and some government employees (Chase 1964: 49-50).

Prior to legal recognition of the BGLU in 1921, there were no laws in British Guiana which explicitly forbad trade union activity. Although the Employers and Servants Ordinance of 1853 could be interpreted as a prohibition of trade union activity, it was evidently not used for this purpose by the Gyuanese ruling class. Instead, most employers simply dismissed "ringleaders" who attempted to organize workers, or who led demonstrations or pickets. Despite a long record of such dismissals, informal precedents for collective bargaining had long been established in the form of meetings between governments and employers, and deputations of workers, including indentured labourers.

The efforts of the BGLU to obtain legal recognition were resisted by the Colonial Government. This matter was raised by Labour members in

the British Parliament, and the British Guiana government was instructed to adopt trade union legislation. This was done in June and July, 1921.

The economic crisis which accompanied these events was ~~part~~ of the worldwide slump which swept the capitalist world after World War I. By January, 1921, over two million people were unemployed in England. In Guyana, increasing prices were accompanied by wage reductions and retrenchment. Critchlow provided the following table of increases in the price of staples for 1917:

TABLE VII

Price Increases, 1917

	January, 1917	October, 1917
Rice	4¢ per pt.	5¢ per pt.
Flour	5¢ per lb.	10¢ per lb.
Corn Flour	4¢ per lb.	8¢ per lb.
Split Peas	6¢ per lb.	12¢ per lb.
Sugar	4¢ per lb.	5¢ per lb.
Salt Pork	16¢ per lb.	28¢ per lb.
Salt Fish	12¢ per lb.	16¢ per lb.
Salt Beef	16¢ per lb.	28¢ per lb.
Kerosene Oil	4¢ per 1/2 btl.	6¢ per 1/2 btl.
Cotton Seed Oil	24¢ per pt.	36¢ per pt.
Soap	2 cks. for 3¢	2 for 4¢
Plantains	2 for 3¢	2 for 4¢
Eddoes	4 lbs. for 8¢	2-1/2 lbs. for 8¢
Butter	40¢ per lb.	56¢ per lb.
Milk	4¢ per pt.	6¢ per pt.
Biscuits	5 for 1¢	3 for 1¢

(cited in Chase 1964: 49)

At this time, wages averaged $4.80 per week for waterfront workers employed on a casual basis (Chase 1964: 48).

Price and rent increases continued throughout the 1920's. By 1921, wages had been reduced by approximately 20%, and the normal labour force had decreased by about 40% (Chase 1964: 62). In 1922, employers imposed another wage cut that was accepted by the BGLU in exchange for

a reduction in rents (Chase 1964: 63). Also, the BGLU

> held several largely attended unemployment demonstrations, the vast majority in the mornings to impress the gravity of the situation upon the Government and the Chamber of Commerce (Chase 1964: 65).

At the same time, the BGLU was enrolling East Indian plantation labourers and campaigning for improvements in their wages and working conditions. Chase writes,

> The Labour Union had at this time been vigorously campaigning for "East Indians to be paid on an equal basis with other labouring people of other races in the Colony"... It opposed piece work on the Sugar Estates as being a form of work that permitted the employers to extract the greatest amount of surplus value out of the workers. Those measures had the warm support of sugar workers and it was noticeable that at this period workers travelled to the city from East and West Coast of Demerara, from the East and West Banks of Demerara and even from Essequibo to participate in the major demonstrations (1964: 67).

From this demand, we can infer that planters paid East Indian plantation workers less than the amounts received by Afro-Guyanese urban workers and estate workers. The BGLU's call for equality in wages led some East Indian plantation labourers to join the Union. Ann Spackman writes,

> In addition to its demands for dock labour, the B.G.L.U. had been trying to expand its activities into the sugar plantations of the East Bank. It had distributed pamphlets and had called meetings of workers during March 1924, apparently with the aim of expanding its organization outside Georgetown into the crucial sugar areas and obviously emphasizing low wages, poor working conditions and possible child labour. This contact between Afro-Guyanese and East Indian labour was unusual and would obviously cause alarm in government and among employers (1973: 320).

This action of the BGLU is significant insofar as it represents the first attempt by a formally instituted workers' organization to form

permanent links between Indo- and Afro-Guyanese workers. It was in the context of this initial attempt at formalized cooperation that the strikes and "riots" of 1924 occurred.

Section 2 - The Strike of 1924

As in 1905, the disturbances began on the waterfront. On March 31, 1924, the wharf workers, followed by the stevedores, ceased work in response to a call by the BGLU. Chase writes,

> The Labour Union demanded that the rates for stevedores be increased from $1.60 to $2.00 per day, ordinary packers from $1.12 to $1.44, and truckers from 84 cents to $1.20 per day. The Union also wanted double time rates for night work, Saturday afternoons, holidays and for work done between 4:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.... The Labour Union appealed to both town and country workers for support. It had previously petitioned the Governor and the Court of Policy for the fixing of minimum wages for all workers, and was annoyed that the Governor should have sent its petition to the Chamber of Commerce for an expression of opinion as to its contents.
>
> April 1st, 1924, the second day of the strike, witnessed a mammoth labour demonstration in the city, in which several hundred sugar workers joined (1964: 66-67).

The sewerage workers joined the strike, and strikers forced the closure of the bauxite loading facilities, the power house, construction sites, the city railway, and most stores. Black servants in the homes of rich whites were "liberated" by the strikers without violence.

> The Governor, Sir Graeme Thomson, issued a Proclamation before the close of the day invoking in Georgetown the provisions of the Summary Convictions Offences Ordinance, 1898, and ordering all city Spirit Shops to remain closed until further orders. By 2nd April, this prohibition was extended to Kitty and East Bank Spirits Shops. He also called out the Active and Reserve Military Forces and commanded them to disperse all riotous and tumultuous assemblies. All open air meetings and demonstrations were cancelled, but the Labour Union obtained permission to hold a Town Hall meeting to report to the workers.

> Mr. Critchlow and "Professor" Osbourne met a section of the demonstrators at the Water Works and appealed to them not to injure their cause by violent acts. They disassociated themselves from any acts of violence. Mr. Critchlow invited the demonstrators to the Bourda Green where he, the "Professor" and John Lucie Griffith addressed the workers and counselled them to go to their homes (Chase 1964: 67-68).

After the Governor had agreed to further negotiations, Critchlow ordered the strikers back to work. They complied reluctantly. Although a conference between the Chamber of Commerce and a Union Representative was later held, all union demands were rejected on April 4, 1924, and the Governor rejected a subsequent appeal from Critchlow for arbitration.

At the same time, there were work-stoppages on the sugar plantations. According to the Immigration Agent-General, ". . .practically the whole working population of the East Bank, Black and East Indian, went on strike" (C.O. 114/192: 256). As in 1905, the "disturbances" began on estates near Georgetown when workers from Plantations, Houston, Farm, and Providence stopped work on April 2, 1924. Large numbers of Black and East Indian workers from Farm marched to Providence and urged workers to join them. The enlarged crowd that marked to Diamond, and was confronted by policemen and soldiers armed with a machine gun and artillery. Under this threat, the predominantly Afro-Guyanese factory hands (e.g., sugar boilers and mechanics) returned to work, but the predominantly Indo-Guyanese field workers joined the crowd which started to march to Georgetown. A "Black Barbadian" member of the BGLU was reported to have been instrumental in organizing the strike and the march. Ann Spackman writes,

> The evidence of eye witnesses and even of participants is confused about the object of the march. Certainly some of the East Indian marchers thought they were going, as was normal, to present their grievances to

> "Crosby" The Immigration Agent-General who was supposed to safeguard the rights of immigrants . Others thought that they were going to meet Mr. Critchlow and presumably join with the dockers in demanding higher wages. The point is an important one since if this was a normal march to "Crosby" there was much less danger to employers and the government than if it was intended to link up with the estate labourers. The leaders of the East Indian Association attempted to disperse the crowd, many of whom did think that they were going to see "Crosby". However, the intentions of the grassroots leaders, including the ubiquitous "black barbadian", are much less clear - some of them must have had an idea of joining forces with the Georgetown crowd and continuing the disturbances of two days previous (1973: 322).

The procession of East Indians and Blacks was headed by a band, and members of the crowd chanted, "We ain't want to see soldier with gun and revolver, we want see money" (Chase 1964: 71). However, before the crowd reached Georgetown, it was peaceably dispersed.

On the following day, April 3rd, a mixed crowd of approximately 4,000 plantation workers with their wives and children again headed for Georgetown. When they reached Ruimveldt, they were met by armed policemen who stopped them and offered to let workers' representatives continue to Georgetown. The offer was rejected, and the crowd attempted to continue. Although the police succeeded in stopping the march again, they opened fire, killing 12 and seriously wounding 15. Many others were slightly wounded. Evidently, both Indo- and Afro-Guyanese were among the dead and wounded. As in 1905, the killings sparked attempts at retaliation by Blacks in Georgetown.

> ....after the shootings there were four attempts at arson, all against whites, and on two homes which were attacked were pinned the following notices:

TO ALL EUROPEANS:
WHY, WE HAVE DONE IT, BECAUSE YOU HAVE
SHOT OUR FELLOW MEN EAST INDIANS, AND NEGROES, AND
THROUGHOUT DEMERARA, WE ARE NOT SATISFIED WITH
SHOOTING
AND ARE SEEKING REVENGE

> ...After the Ruimveldt killings had occurred the authorities clearly had to conduct an enquiry. The law proscribed unnecessary violence and therefore it had to be proved that Captain Ramsay, who was acting on the Governor's instruction, had acted properly. The Governor therefore appointed a Mr. Reid who had legal training but who was guaranteed to find in favour of the official version of what happened. Mr. A.A. Thorne a coloured lawyer had written to the Colonial Office pointing out that Mr. Reid was unfit to conduct the enquiry as he was a private solicitor and three of the attorneys appearing before him on behalf of the police, the military and the estates were members of Mr. Reid's own firm.
>
> ....the Colonial Office gave its fullest support to all action taken. Mr. Darnley of the C.O. minuted: "we may congratulate ourselves on the restraint and firmness with which the police dealt with a most dangerous mob, on the point of sacking Georgetown."
> (Spackman 1973: 325)

The Ruimveldt Massacre marked the end of the 1924 strike on the sugar plantations. As in 1905, the government and the Chamber of Commerce at least made a pretense of bargaining with Afro-Guyanese urban workers, but rejected out of hand the demands of the predominantly Indo-Guyanese plantation workers.

Section 3 - Racist Ideology, Class Struggle and Ruling Class Policy

In many important respects, the 1924 "disturbance" can be characterized as an instance of class struggle, i.e., as conscious cooperation between non-white ethnic groups in the working class in an industrial struggle against the ruling class. The response of some East Indian plantation workers to the appeals of the BGLU, and the intention of at

some of them to see Critchlow and/or join the Georgetown strikers on April 2 and 3, 1924, seem to indicate the presence of some degree of working class consciousness among Indo-Guyanese workers. And the BGLU attempt to contact Indo-Guyanese plantation workers, the cooperation of Black workers with East Indians on the marches of April 2 and 3, 1924, and the response of urban Blacks to the Ruimveldt Massacre also seem to indicate the presence of some degree of working class consciousness among Black workers. However, the presence of racist ideology among Indo- and Afro-Guyanese workers was also apparent during this period. In 1924, the Inspector-General of Police wrote that the stimulation of race consciousness and anti-white feeling among Black workers was "most noticeable at meetings of the Negro People's Convention, an organization led by educated middle-class Blacks which was as anti-East Indian as it was anti-white" (Spackman 1973: 318). Although there is no evidence to indicate the nature of this anti-East Indian sentiment, it seems likely that it had to do with the increasing numbers of property of East Indian rice farmers and East Indian retailers (see Tables VIII and IX), and government proposals to revive East Indian immigration (which had ended in 1917). It is likely that middle-class Afro-Guyanese feared that the introduction of more East Indian indentured labourers would lead to government land settlement schemes exclusively for East Indians. This, in turn, would eventually generate a greater threat to the political and economic position of the Afro-Guyanese middle class, as the sons of the well-to-do East Indians entered the professions and sought jobs in the civil service.

After the influenza epidemic of 1918 had killed approximately 12,000 East Indians in British Guiana, the planters needed to replenish

TABLE VIII

Excerpts From
Immigration Agent-General's Administrative
Report of 1924

Returned to India: 357
Total amount taken to India by returnees: $42,292.05;
in jewelry: $ 8,215.00
East Indian deposition in Post Office
in Savings Banks: $855,040.98
Number of Depositors: 8,545
(all other "races" had total deposits of $1,020,986.64, with 27,047 depositors).

Remittances to India: $8,663 in money orders to India
Retail and other licenses for selected items held by East Indians:

Donkey carts	- 2,159
Hucksters	- 1,094
Colony Craft	- 893
Dogs	- 7,896
Cycles	- 949
Provision shops	- 125
Spirits	- 5
Shops (rural)	- 427
Stores	- 92
Wine and malt	- 127
Indian hemp	- 12
Guns	- 389
Revolvers	- 12
Tobacco	- 667
Public entertainment (ball or dance)	- 111
Motor cycles	- 8
Cars	- 200
Boilers	- 44

Number of East Indian rural constables: 246
East Indians employed by municipalities of Georgetown and New Amsterdam: 322
East Indian students registered in schools:

Preparatory	- 4,027
Lower	- 4,006
Middle	- 2,111
Upper	- 609
Total	-10,753
Average daily attendance	- 6,545

TABLE VIII - Excerpts from Immigration Agent-General's Administrative Report of 1924 (Continued)

In villages with local government boards, East Indians had 839 licences to sell milk and maintained 561 cattle pens and byres.

On 35 estates, 6,161 East Indians kept 16,700 cattle; 90 rice mills were operated throughout the populated coastal strip. In Georgetown, 372 East Indians acquired $581,799 in property; in New Amsterdam, 143 East Indians acquired $103,420 in property.

(C.O.114/192: 249-265)

TABLE IX

Rice Cultivation by East Indians on Sugar Estates, 1924
From Administrative Report of the Immigration
Agent-General for 1924

Estate	Numbers of East Indians Planting Rice	Number of Acres	Rent per Acre
Skeldon	425	320	$1
Springlands	95	55	None
Port Mourant	1,721	1,680	$4-6
Albion	1,450	1,020	$3
Rose Hall	1,352	1,702	$1-5
Providence	266	204	Villagers $4
Friends	44	10	None
Blairmont	536	550	-
Bath	213	326	-
Cane Grove	39	26	-
Hope	-	-	-
Cove and John	10[illegible]	54	-
Enmore	742	414	-
Non Pareil	1,100	549	-
Lusigman	965	490	1/2 acre free
Mon Repos	90	50	-
La Bonne Intention	418	209	-
Vryheid's Lust	150	80	-
Ogle	598	414	1/2 acre free
Houston	5	3	-
Schoon Ord	63	35	-
Versailles	148	78	-
Best and Pheonix	-	-	-
Mary and Haarlem	30	55	$6
Ruimzigt	108	155	-
Windsor Forest	118	440	-
La Jalousie	286	750	-
Hague	340	860	-
Blankenburg	208	184	$4
Leonora	787	362	-
Uitvlugt	234	162	-
De Kinderen	155	108	-
Tuschen de Vrienden	92	71	-
B.G. Coconut Estates	-	-	$4
Enterprise	80	320	-
Maryville	60	425	$4-6
Success, Legua	100	450	$6
Anna Regina	600	500	$3
Marionville	76	50	-
Hampton Court	212	105	free

On estates, East Indians also cultivated approximately 1,000 acres of provisions. (C.O. 114/192:265)

their labour force. They sent a delegation, headed by Dr. Joseph Nunan, to Britain to convince the Colonial Office to revive East Indian immigration. The delegation included representatives of predominantly middle-class Indo- and Afro-Guyanese organizations. The delegation proposed a scheme that ostensibly furthered the interests of planters, middle-class Indo-Guyanese, and middle class Afro-Guyanese. Immigrants were not to be bound by indenture contracts, and were to have access to Crown land. Furthermore, there were to be equal numbers of African and East Indian immigrants. Theoretically, this would have replenished the plantation labour force, provided more propertied constituents for middle-class Indo-Guyanese leaders, and given Blacks long-sought access to agricultural land. Evidently, neither the Indo- or Afro-Guyanese members of this and later delegations publicly dealt with the possibility that an influx of plantation labour would lower plantation wages further when they were already disastrously low. In any case, the Black contingent of the delegation withdrew

> when it became clear in discussions with the Colonial Office that the planters were really only interested in immigration from India (Daly 1975: 283).

Later, in 1919, another delegation composed of planters, East Indian Association leaders, and representatives of the Negro People's Convention travelled to India to convince Gandhi and other Indian leaders of the desirability of reviving immigration. Again, the Negro People's Convention insisted upon equal numbers of Black immigrants. The Indian Colonial government decided to send a committee to British Guiana to investigate the conditions of Indo-Guyanese plantation workers before deciding on the issue of reviving immigration. Two Indian members of the Committee, Pillai and Tiwary, claimed that high

mortality rates, low wages, and the generally poor social and economic condition of East Indian plantation workers in British Guiana resulted from exploitation and ill-treatment by the plantation owners. Consequently, public opinion in India turned against further immigration, and the Indian colonial government did not revive it. The Sugar Producers' Association (SPA) published numerous "refutations" of the Pillai and Tiwary report, and in 1924 the SPA and the British Guiana Colonial Government sent another delegation to India in order to gain the support of the Indian government and Gandhi for renewed immigration to British Guiana. The delegation was composed of Sir Joseph Nunan and J.A. Luckhoo, a wealthy member of the East Indian Association (EIA). The delegation had the support of the EIA, and was also supported by the Negro People's Convention

> ....subject to a serious or equivalent effort being made to introduce colonists of the African race (CO 114/188: 31).

Despite the efforts of the SPA delegation, East Indian immigration was never revived.

Although the attempt to revive East Indian immigration, and the growth in numbers and prosperity of East Indian rice farmers and East Indian retailers, resulted directly from ruling class policy (e.g., exclusion of Blacks from government land settlement schemes for East Indians, and the practice of ruling class wholesalers and bankers to withhold credit from Black retailers while extending credit to Portuguese and East Indian retailers), it is likely that Blacks sometimes "explained" these developments in terms of ruling class racial stereotypes of East Indians. At the same time, many Blacks correctly saw that these developments resulted from the policies and practices of the ruling class. In this sense, there were tendencies toward racist

ideology as well as working class consciousness among Blacks.

There were similar contradictory tendencies among East Indians. The EIA was instrumental in stimulating anti-Black feeling among East Indian Workers.

> It was from this combination of merchant/professional group among the East Indians that the East Indian Association (EIA) was born. Inasmuch as the EIA was seen as an East Indian organisation in its true sense, it was a middle class group that was seeking identity among other ethnic middle class groups. This group never championed the cause of the lower class, Indo-Guianese sugar workers and small rice farmers. On the contrary, while "pressure groups" in Britain were advocating ....the termination of the "immigration system" of indentured labour to the British colonies, it was the middle class East Indians (Nath 1969: 164-181) of the British Guiana who went to India to plead the case of the British Guiana planters who desired the continuation of immigrant labourers to the colony (Thakur 1973: 61).

During the disturbances of 1924, Mr. Kawall, the president of the EIA, tried to persuade the crowd of plantation labourers to disperse on April 3, 1924 (Chase 1964: 72), and later attempted to blame the strike and march on the "Black Barbadian" when faced with a charge of incitement (Spackman 1973: 322). According to the Immigration-Agent-General,

> ....Kawall and his Committeeman Ramprashad wished to preserve as far as possible a position "on the fence" and while not wishing actively to obstruct the police authorities, that they did nothing of any moment during the earlier part of the week to allay the excitement (CO 114/192: 256).

At an inquiry into the causes of the 1924 "disturbances," Kawall claimed that his Association had not had a meeting on the East Bank for one year prior to the strike (Chase 1964: 72). However, Spackman points out that,

> The East Indian Association had also been active on the East Bank at the same time as the Negro People's Convention - i.e., in March, 1924 . Meetings had been held in villages to discuss, in particular, demands for higher wages, and also the current Colonization Scheme which was intended to bring colonists to settle in Guyana from India.

> It was believed [by Indo-Guyanese workers], and resented, that these new colonists would be given special facilities to acquire land which had been properly drained and irrigated - the dream of most estate labourers of Guyana (1973: 320).

Spackman does not indicate whether or not the EIA advocated the allocation of Crown land to East Indians already residing in Guyana. However, it seems likely that the EIA, whether it opposed Land Settlement Schemes for new East Indian immigrants or not, argued that Crown agricultural land should only be made available to Indo-Guyanese; Afro-Guyanese were to be excluded. In 1938 this policy was urged by Indo-Guyanese merchants and professionals on the basis of ruling class racial stereotypes. Indo-Guyanese were said to be "naturally" suited for agriculture, while Afro-Guyanese were said to be "naturally" unsuited for farming. Many of the East Indian merchants and professionals who presented this argument to a Royal Commission in 1938 were longstanding members of the EIA. Their brief was entitled "A Comparative Review of the Suitability of the Various Races as Settlers of Any Land Settlement and Colonisation Scheme in B.G.", from the "East Indian Intelligentsia of British Guiana". As evidence for their argument regarding the "racial" characteristics which made for suitability (or unsuitability) they cited the fact that "the Canals Polders I and 2 were settled with Africans who have now been superseded by Indians; other instances could be cited elsewhere". The role of the ruling class policy in shaping this situation (i.e., the stifling of the Afro-Guyanese peasantry and petit bourgeoisie, and the exclusion of Afro-Guyanese from government land settlement schemes), was not mentioned in the brief.

In light of the foregoing activities of the EIA, it is clear that there was a tendency among certain sectors of the East Indian population

to use ruling class racial stereotypes to argue that only East Indians should have access to agricultural Crown land. Insofar as these arguments were accepted by Indo-Guyanese workers, there can be no doubt that they caused friction and inhibited unity between Indo- and Afro-Guyanese workers. This is clear from the concern of Black organizations that East Indians were being given Crown agricultural land that was denied to Blacks. At the same time, it is clear that significant numbers of East Indian workers were interested in joining Black workers in the BGLU in political and industrial action to gain concessions from the ruling class. In this sense, there were tendencies toward racist ideology as well as working class consciousness among East Indians which reflected tendencies toward conflict and cooperation between Indo- and Afro-Guyanese workers.

The role of the Indo- and Afro-Guyanese middle classes in these processes was ambiguous. On the one hand, Black and Coloured lawyers supported the BGLU and called for an impartial investigation into the Ruimveldt Massacre. At the same time, the Negro People's Convention promoted Black immigration without public discussion of the effects that this policy would have upon plantation wages. Similarly, the EIA championed further East Indian immigration without public discussion of the effect that such immigration would have upon plantation wages.

In summary, a world-wide capitalist crisis forced the Guyanese ruling class to cut the wages of workers in all subordinated ethnic groups. This action, coupled with rising prices, led to cooperation between Indo- and Afro-Guyanese workers in the strike of 1924. This strike was preceded by the first attempts to organize both Afro- and Indo-Guyanese workers into a single trade union. At the same time,

Indo-Guyanese sometimes used the positive features of the ruling class stereotype of East Indians to "explain" their success at retailing and rice farming, and the negative features of the ruling class racial stereotype of Blacks to "explain" why Afro-Guyanese had not succeeded in these enterprises. Indo-Guyanese sometimes appealed to ruling class racial stereotypes in arguing that Blacks should be excluded from government land settlement schemes. On the other hand, Blacks sometimes used the negative features of the ruling class racial stereotype of East Indians to "explain" Indo-Guyanese success at retailing and agriculture. Use of ruling class ideology in these ways probably hardened pre-existing ethnic boundaries between Indo- and Afro-Guyanese, and diverted the attention of Indo- and Afro-Guyanese workers from the fact that their respective social and economic conditions were almost exclusively attributable to ruling class policies - especially to differential allocation of economic benefits and burdens to subordinated ethnic groups. The use of ruling class racist ideology by Afro- and Indo-Guyanese workers also inhibited unity in political and industrial struggles against the ruling class. In the next chapter, we shall see that the tendency toward unity between Indo- and Afro-Guyanese workers in struggles against the ruling class was tremendously strengthened after World War II by the emergence of the PPP and its introduction of Marxist-Leninist ideology to Guyanese politics. We shall also see that the main weapons used by the Guyanese ruling class (and the governments of the U.S. and Britain) to counter the PPP were anti-Communism and racist ideology.

CHAPTER VI

CLASS, ETHNICITY, AND THE RISE OF THE PPP

Introduction

In this chapter, it shall be shown that the inter-ethnic unity exhibited during the rise of the PPP conforms to the model of inter-ethnic relations outlined in Chapter II. The increased trade union militancy of Indo- and Afro-Guyanese workers after World War II was precipitated by the economic crisis of the 1930's and poor wages and working conditions that existed throughout the war. This trade union militancy was uniformly resisted by major employers who imposed a more-or-less equal economic penalty upon workers from both major subordinated ethnic groups, viz., refusal to recognize their unions. In these circumstances many Indo- and Afro-Guyanese workers united in supporting the Political Affairs Committee (PAC) (later the PPP), which led them in political and economic struggles against the ruling class. In short, the ruling class policy of imposition of more-or-less equal economic burdens upon workers in major subordinated ethnic groups created conditions for unity between Indo- and Afro-Guyanese workers in political and economic struggles against the ruling class. At the same time, ruling class policies of differential allocation worked to disrupt working class unity.

Section 1 - Guyanese Political Economy in the 1920's and 1930's

During the last part of the 19th century and the early part of the 20th century, Afro-Guyanese were allowed by the ruling class to enter the lower ranks of the public service while most Indo-Guyanese remained "locked up" in the sugar plantations. Despres writes,

> Although the available historical data are inadequate for the precise kind of comparisons that would be most useful, it is quite evident that the public service in Guyana has been a most important source of employment, particularly for urban Africans, during all of this century and much of the last. In 1891, for example, Africans and a few Europeans made up almost the entire teaching profession. As early as 1900, Africans comprised an overwhelming majority of the unpensionable staff in practically every department of the public service. In 1940 they represented 67 percent of all pensionable public servants. And by 1960, they ranked second only to Europeans among departmental heads in the public service. By way of contrast, in 1931 only 12 percent of all Guyanese professionals and public servants (6,202) were East Indians. Also in 1931, East Indians contributed only 7 percent to the 1,397 Guyanese employed in the teaching profession. As late as 1960, East Indians comprised but 16 percent of all pensionable civil servants and only six Indians, compared to twenty-six Africans, could be counted among the fifty-seven departmental heads (1975: 94).

While Afro-Guyanese civil servants, professionals, and businessmen may have harbored ruling class 'racial' stereotypes regarding the 'natural' propensities of Indo-Guyanese during the 1920's and 1930's, many of them were still dissatisfied with the racial barriers to their social and occupational advancement erected by the ruling class. Also, some of them were sympathetic to Critchlow and the BGLU's attempts to organize Indo- and Afro-Guyanese plantation workers. Thus, when a small group of Afro-Guyanese professionals and businessmen in Georgetown made public their intention to run for the few offices that were filled by election rather than appointment, they enjoyed the support of most Indo- and Afro-Guyanese workers in or near Georgetown. Although property, income, and literacy qualifications kept the franchise from virtually all Indo- and Afro-Guyanese workers, middle-class Indo- and Afro-Guyanese had sufficient numbers to elect candidates if they voted en masse. Both the planters and the Colonial Government saw this possibility as a direct threat to their control of the colony's finances

(Thakur 1973: 63). As early as 1910, the Immigration Agent-General argued that the entry of Afro-Guyanese into public office would necessitate special measures for the "protection" of Indo-Guyanese; presumably such special measures were to involve a continuation of the so-called "impartial" exercise of power by the Colonial Government (Daly 1966: 312). At any rate, this was the way the Immigration Agent-General's argument was interpreted by a Royal Commission on Constitutional change and extension of the electorate in 1927. According to the Commission's final report, when the electorate is extended in a tropical colony there is a

> ....loss to public life of no inconsiderable portion of those who are best qualified for it, or in other words, of the small but extremely important European class which still controls the principal agricultural and commercial activities of the Colony (cited in Spackman 1973: 328).

As a result of this report, the role of elected representatives was diminished, the constitution suspended, and Crown Colony Rule was imposed. Ram Karran writes,

> Thereafter, mainly through opportunistic middle-class professionals, they (i.e., the plantocracy and the Colonial Office) set about to undermine the influence of Critchlow in the B.G. Labour Union and to emasculate the union.
>
> With the emasculation of the class-conscious Critchlow movement, race gained the ascendancy. In this period, it was largely fostered by the rivalry between the petty-bourgeois, middle-class African and Indians (1974: 11).

The depression of the 1930's, which brought lower earnings and irregular employment to sugar workers, led to the formation of a new plantation workers' union, the Man Power Citizens' Association (MPCA), the first union that was exclusively intended to represent the interests of sugar workers. Since the majority of sugar workers had not been

organized by the BGLU, the field was clear for the MPCA. The leading organizer was Ayube Edun, an Indo-Guyanese who used his newspaper, the 'Labour Advocate', to promote the interests of sugar workers and the MPCA. Although the sugar workers organized by the MPCA were predominantly Indo-Guyanese, MPCA leaders included both Indo- and Afro-Guyanese. They also included a woman, Miss Eleanor Sewdin, who was vice-president in 1939 and treasurer in 1940 (Chase 1964: 86).

Although the MPCA was registered in 1937, it was not recognized by the Sugar Producers' Association (SPA) until 1939 after violent suppression of an MPCA strike at Leonora (Chase 1964: 87-90). The Leonora strike was only one of many that occurred on all of Guyana's sugar plantations during the late 1930's. In 1938, there were 37 work stoppages at Leonora alone, and this was not an exceptionally large number (Chase 1964: 85). The main causes of strikes on estates were long hours and low pay. In 1939, male workers engaged in weeding earned an average of 52 cents for a nine-hour day. They were employed on the average, only four days per week. Female weeders earned, on the average, 37 cents per day. The Leonora strike began on February 13, 1939, when the firemen in the Leonora factory, who were probably Afro-Guyanese, stopped work in protest against their 11-1/2 hour working day. Other factory hands had a 9-1/2 hour day. The firemen were soon joined by Number 2 shovel gang, and later by all field workers, mostly Indo-Guyanese. On February 16, 1939, the field workers ordered the predominantly Afro-Guyanese factory hands out on strike. While Nath claims that this was done by intimidation (1969: 138), there is no question that at least some of the Afro-Guyanese factory hands (i.e.,the firemen who started the strike) helped the Indo-Guyanese field workers to

shut down the factory. A series of confrontations with management and the police culminated in the police firing on a crowd of strikers and spectators, killing four and wounding over a dozen others. A Royal Commission was appointed to inquire into the shootings, and the SPA legally recognized the MPCA before the Royal Commission submitted its report in March, 1939 (Chase 1964: 89). By 1943, the MPCA was the largest union in Guyana, with over 20,000 members (Chase 1964: 87-90).

The 1930's also brought further expansion of the predominantly Indo-Guyanese rice industry. Around 1910, Guyana became self-sufficient in rice, and began to sell to other parts of the British West Indies during World War I when exports from Burma were cut off. After the war, and resumption of the Burmese trade, rice exports from Guyana to the West Indies dwindled. In 1932, a Rice Marketing Board (RMB) was established to assist rice producers in marketing their product. The RMB became the sole buyer and seller of all Guyanese rice. All members of the RMB executive were appointed by the Governor and, for the most part, represented the interests of the owners of the sugar industry who wished to maintain a large supply of cheap labour on or near the plantations. Thus, the RMB kept returns to rice producers low so that sugar workers could not rely on rice cultivation as their sole source of income (Nath 1969: 112, 115; Payne 1971: 49). However, the ruling class was compelled to change its policies affecting the rice industry during World War II. The disruption of British shipping by U-boats, and the necessity for allocating most ships to the North Atlantic run, meant that British shipping to Guyana was severely curtailed. Consequently, imports of foodstuffs to Guyana and the British West Indies declined, and the colonial government was compelled

to pursue policies aimed at making Guyana self-sufficient in food production and capable of exporting as well. The colonial government encouraged the expansion of the rice industry so that Guyanese rice could be supplied to the rest of the British West Indies. Although returns to rice farmers remained low, many East Indian plantation labourers seized this opportunity and moved off the sugar estates to establish small rice farms in Berbice, often with support from the colonial government. By 1946, 64,845 acres were used for sugar cultivation, while 100,763 acres were used for rice cultivation (King 1968: 48; see Tables X and XI). Although the ruling class was concerned with the loss of estate labour, their interests were temporarily sacrificed in favour of Britain's overall war aims.

While the large sugar exports during the Second World War enabled the MPCA to gain some of its demands, trade union organization among urban workers was languishing. Although the BGLU and other unions were vocal and active in protesting against declining wages and increasing unemployment, their membership was small, and their financial resources were limited (Chase 1964: 90-93). Low wages and increasing unemployment were prevalent throughout the British West Indies, and resulted in "widespread strikes and disturbances in British Guiana in 1936 and in Barbados, Trinidad and Jamaica in 1938 and 1939" (Jagan 1972: 61). In 1938, a Royal Commission, headed by Lord Moyne, was sent to investigate conditions in the British West Indues. In British Guiana, the Commision found, among other things, that

> ....unemployment was a major factor in the disturbances. Such was its proportions that demonstrations of unemployed were the causes of growing concern to the Colonial government.... It was also found that "the interests of the workers have been virtually unprotected". There were no

TABLE X

Area Under Rice Cultivation

Year	Acres	Year	Acres	Year	Acres
1884-88	about 2,500	1928	44,359	1949	87,631
1889-93	2,500	1929	52,989	1950	93,637
1894-98	7,490	1930	52,287	1951	100,250
1899-1903	15,020	1931	77,478	1952	133,000
1903	17,500	1932	73,453	1953	112,500
1908	29,746	1933	72,161	1954	139,500
1913	33,888	1934	63,227	1955	153,000
1914	47,037	1935	70,882	1956	118,469
1915	50,737	1936	51,041	1957	136,900
1916	57,022	1937	60,079	1958	155,140
1917	58,090	1938	49,159	1959	179,200
1918	60,432	1939	60,007	1960	195,275
1919	61,200	1940	57,859	1961	226,304
1920	55,246	1941	82,906	1962	210,000
1921	55,911	1942	89,209	1963	166,145
1922	49,073	1943	85,984	1964	278,484
1923	34,965	1944	91,729	1965	278,000
1924	29,406	1945	63,015	1966	266,078
1925	29,333	1946	64,630	1967	210,631
1926	32,798	1947	85,623	1968	210,985
1927	37,340	1948	74,346	1969	279,303

Sources of information. - 1884 to 1903, from report of the Statistics Sub-Committee of the General Colonisation Scheme (1919); 1903 to 1918, from Handbook of British Guiana, op.cit.; 1919 to 1944, from the Director of Agriculture's Administration Reports; 1945 to date from the Department of Agriculture. The figures between 1844 and 1903 represent area reaped, while the others represent area under cultivation.

(Source: Nath 1969:260)

TABLE XI

SUGAR

Area Under Cane Cultivation

The number of sugar estates in the colony was as follows:

Year	No. of Estates	Year	No. of Estates	Year	No. of Estates
1839	222	1911	44	1931	38
1891	101	1921	44	1948	24
				1970	21[1]

While the number of estates decreased from time to time several small estates were amalgamated and the area under cultivation was increased from 24,850 acres in 1841 to 107,460 acres in 1967 or more than four times the 1841 acreage.

Year	Total area under cultivation (acres)	Area under cane cultivation (acres)	Quantity of sugar exported (hogsheads)	Year	Total area under cultivation[2] (acres)	Area under cane cultivation (acres)	Quantity of sugar exported (tons)
1841	not	24,850	31,199	1939	172,410	67,718	179,103
1851	available	31,354	43,034	1940	170,355	70,822	142,714
1861	"	52,726	73,347	1941	201,042	73,063	154,371
1871	"	75,944	104,204	1942	207,251	74,583	134,530
			Tons	1943	192,733	67,351	131,187
1881	142,635	77,379	92,323	1944	201,060	76,543	177,993
1891	169,920	78,307	116,968	1945	210,886	63,015	132,595
1901	157,644	67,884	105,694	1946	204,382	64,630	147,777
1908	147,967	74,860	115,213	1947	214,214	67,335	185,109
1913	152,072	72,685	87,414	1948	197,138	67,372	136,673
1918	197,887	73,565	93,902	1949		68,533	175,833
1919	190,717	70,876	83,140	1950		72,403	173,283
1920	175,992	69,532	83,765	1951		79,624	180,288
1921	172,151	63,420	108,270	1952		82,234	234,221
1922	156,000	60,761	90,571	1953		79,238	211,820
1923	136,552	57,814	83,167	1954		80,493	243,915
1924	136,294	57,190	85,896	1955		80,594	242,526

not available

TABLE XI (Continued)

Year	Total area under cultivation (acres)	Area under cane cultivation (acres)	Quantity of sugar exported (hogsheads)	Year	Total area under cultivation[2] (acres)	Area under cane cultivation (acres)	Quantity of sugar exported (tons)
1925	139,543	57,500	97,728	1956		83,263	245,911
1926	141,401	58,589	84,659	1957		89,034	255,536
1927	151,833	59,271	109,271	1958		90,907	300,320
1928	159,928	57,625	114,687	1959		92,569	225,156
1929	166,566	57,247	100,449	1960		98,094	308,992
1930	160,986	57,244	114,542	1961		107,840	313,246
1931	186,712	61,097	119,346	1962		100,227	310,205
1932	185,368	62,905	137,078	1963		97,151	273,338
1933	182,646	63,093	127,083	1964		95,183	234,650
1934	169,906	61,567	129,913	1965		101,636	266,604
1935	178,544	67,914	174,156	1966		97,606	279,141
1936	156,526	69,235	176,505	1967		107,460	318,901
1937	170,723	70,233	181,574	1968		95,807	292,991
1938	158,352	69,087	183,478				

Not available

[1]Eleven of the 21 estates have their own factories

[2]Figures not available after 1948.

(Source: Nath 1969:249)

> formal collective labour agreements. Wage rates were laid down by the employers alone. It was a "fair generalisation to say that while agricultural employers are comparatively well organised, the workers are either completely unorganised or are only partly organised".
>
> The Commission found that there was not systematic reporting of accidents, often machinery was unguarded and there was no obligation to fence machinery.... The Commission was satisfied that children under the legal age were employed in industry and agriculture. This they strongly deprecated. The exclusion of about 75% of the working population from the benefits of workmen's compensation was noted by the Commission. They recommended that this be changed and that a Workmen's Compensation Board similar to that then existing in the Province of Ontario should be set up. The main benefits of this latter recommendation, which was not implemented, were to reduce litigation and costs and to provide for 1. occupational rehabilitation facilities, 2. pensions for permanent total disablement, and 3. pensions to dependent survivors in cases of fatal accidents (Chase 1964: 94-95).

The findings of the Moyne Commission were not released during World War II, since the British Government felt that they could be used for anti-British propaganda by the Axis. However, some of the Commission's recommendations were implemented after the war, including a levy on the sugar producers for the establishment of a sugar workers' welfare fund, and the establishment of a Labour Department to assist in settling labour disputes (Chase 1964: 96-101).

Section 2 - The Political Affairs Committee

In 1943, Dr. Cheddi Jagan, an Indo-Guyanese whose father was a retired "sirdar" (i.e., driver, or foreman in a field gang) on a Corentyne sugar estate, returned to Guyana after studying dentistry in the U.S. After several years in Georgetown, Jagan, and his white American wife, Janet, became committed to end the domination of Guyanese society by Bookers and the Colonial Office, and to the establishment of

an independent, socialist Guyana. The Jagans saw the means to these ends in the formation of a multi-ethnic political party drawing its main support from the working class and the trade union movement (Jagan 1972: 106). In November, 1946, the Jagans, along with Ashton Chase (a British-trained Afro-Guyanese lawyer) and Jocelyn Hubbard (a white trade union leader), formed the Political Affairs Committee (PAC). The first issue of the PAC Bulletin was published on November 6, 1946, and the aims of the PAC were set out as follows:

> To assist the growth and development of the Labour and Progressive Movements of British Guiana, to the end of establishing a strong, disciplined and enlightened Party, equipped with the theory of scientific socialism;
>
> To provide information, and to present scientific political analyses on current affairs, both local and international; and
>
> To foster and assist discussion groups, through the circulation of Bulletins, Booklets and other printed matter (PPP 1971: 1).

The PAC largely succeeded in its aims after Dr. Jagan, running as an independent, was elected to the legislative assembly in 1947. Jagan used the assembly as a platform for exposing the domination of government by Bookers, and thus won many followers among urban workers (PPP 1971: 2). At the same time, many Indo-Guyanese sugar workers were changing their allegiance from the MPCA to the PAC.

The founders of the MPCA, Ayube Edun and C.R. Jacob, had fought for the interests of sugar workers for several years prior to the registry of the MPCA. Edun had attacked the poor wages and working conditions of sugar workers in a publication called the "Guiana Review", and later in the "Labour Advocate" which he owned and edited (Chase 1964: 86). At the same time, Edun and Jacob were closely connected to the East Indian Association, and had not formed links with urban,

i.e., Black, trade unions (Ram Karran 1974: 12). Although many East Indian sugar workers initially had confidence in the MPCA, this confidence was shaken when several MPCA leaders began to accept money and gifts from the SPA (Chase 1964: 112).

After an unsuccessful PAC-backed attempt to replace the leadership of the MPCA with a more militant and representative executive in 1945 (Chase 1964: 148), a new sugar workers' union, the Guyana Industrial Workers' Union (later the Guyana Agricultural Workers Union, GAWU) was formed in 1946. The more militant GAWU immediately gained the support of many sugar workers, and was backed by the PAC and the Jagans (PPP 1971: 3). By 1948, the British Guiana Labour Commission found that the membership of the MPCA on the sugar estates did not exceed 600, while the GAWU membership was more than 1,200 (Chase 1964: 148). However, the SPA and the Labour Department refused to recognize the GAWU, on the grounds that the MPCA already represented the sugar workers (Chase 1964: 148). This action was taken in spite of the legal responsibility of the Labour Department to consult the workers in settling such disputes (Chase 1964: 148). Consequently, the GAWU called a strike at Enmore in April, 1948, ostensibly to prevent Bookers from requiring field workers to cut canes and then load them on to punts; the GAWU demanded that a separate group of workers should load the canes. However, the main aim of the strikers was to gain recognition for the GAWU (Chase 1964: 141-149). The PAC and Dr. Jagan gave unqualified support to the strikers, particularly after five were killed and fourteen wounded by police gunfire on June 16, 1948 (Chase 1964: 141; PPP 171:3). Janet Jagan worked at the PAC "Soup Kitchen", set up to assist strikers (Chase 1964: 141). Her activities had a great impact upon sugar workers

and their wives.

Although the strikers did not win recognition of the GAWU, a Royal Commission inquiry into the strikers' grievances (the Venn Commission) led to the implementation of the Moyne Commission's recommendation for a sugar industry welfare scheme. This, in turn, led to the availability of adequate housing to many sugar workers for the first time (PPP 1971: 3), and thus secured their support for the Jagans and the PAC.

While many Indo-Guyanese sugar workers came to support the Jagans and the PAC during the Enmore strike of 1948, a similar process had occurred among the predominantly Afro-Guyanese bauxite workers at Mackenzie in 1947. During the 1930's and the war years, wages and working conditions for bauxite miners at Mackenzie were poor. Chase writes,

> ....employees other than those on the monthly staff were entitled to 6 days leave with pay per year, which was increased to 9 days after six years service and to 12 days after 12 years service. Monthly paid employees were entitled to 14 days per year. Unskilled labour was paid 22 cents an hour, compared with 9 cents in 1937. No wages schedule was published and there was uncertainty as to the appropriate rates in some occupations. Deductions from wages often exceeded the amount permitted under the Labour Ordinance.
>
> Two thirds of the Company's employees who lived at Mackenzie were required to sign a contract under which they could be required to quit the Company's premises without notice, and giving the Company the right to eject them without recourse to law. Constables frequently entered the workers' homes without search warrants to ascertain if persons other than authorised tenants were in the rooms (1964: 130).

Non-white workers at Mackenzie were strictly segregated from the white Canadian and European management. The best seats at the local cinema, the best accommodations on the steamer to Georgetown, and the best rooms and food at the local hospital were reserved for whites. Whites could place phone orders for deliveries from the company store, while

non-whites could not. A curfew and a large fence kept non-white workers out of the white staff's residence section between 7 p.m. and 6 a.m. (Chase 1964: 131).

> ....In 1943 there was a six day working week of 60 hours. In 1944 there was a big fall in demand for bauxite and this resulted in heavy retrenchment of workers.... It was not until new uses were found for bauxite that the employment situation improved.

Year	No.of Bauxite Employees	Year	No.of Bauxite Employees
1942	3600	1947	1843
1943	2950	1948	2409
1944	1100	1949	2510
1945	1030	1950	2350
1946	1600		

(Chase 1964:126)

At the same time, increases in the cost of living affected all bauxite miners, as well as all other Guyanese working people. According to a survey completed in 1943, the cost of living was about 60% higher in 1942 than it had been in 1938 (Jagan 1972: 80).

Attempts by bauxite miners at trade union organization and strikes had been sporadic and ineffective up to 1947. "Ringleaders" of trade unions or strikes were summarily dismissed from employment by Demba management which consistently refused to recognise any trade union organized by Demba workers (Chase 1964: 127-130). However, in April 1947, a bitter wildcat strike over the dismissal of union leaders secured recognition for the MPCA at Demba. During the strike, strong financial support was given to the bauxite miners by the Trade Union Council (TUC) whose General Secretary, H.J.M. Hubbard, was one of the founding members of the PAC. The PAC also mounted a propaganda campaign in support of the strikers (Chase 1964: 131-132). Later, in March 1948, Cheddi Jagan mounted a scathing attack in the Legislative

Assembly on the colonial government's 1-1/2% tax on the value of bauxite exported by Demba (Jagan 1972: 73-79). All of these activities made the Jagans and the PAC very popular among many Afro-Guyanese bauxite workers.

Section 3 - The Birth of the PPP and the Election of 1953

The success of the PAC and the Jagans in gaining the support of Indo- and Afro-Guyanese workers led to the formation of the People's Progressive Party (PPP) in January, 1950. The aims of the new party, first published in April 1950, fell under four headings: (1) Constitutional Reform, including universal adult sufferage, (2) Economic Development, including land reform, government planning for full employment, and elevation of qualified Guyanese to positions which had been "reserved" for Europeans, (3) Social Services, including rent control, free education, social security, unemployment insurance, and improvement of health services, and (4) Labour Legislation, including improvement in trade union laws, i.e., letting workers decide which union should represent them, and industrial injuries insurance (PPP 1971: 4). Although the party program was mainly aimed at furthering the interests of workers, it also appealed to Guyanese with educational and professional qualifications who were excluded from employment in government and industry in favour of whites from Britain. This program, in conjunction with the PPP's call for self-government, appealed to anti-colonial sentiments of most non-white Guyanese, irrespective of class (Thakur 1973: 71; Smith, R.T. 1962: 171), and the PPP assumed the character of a broadly-based movement for dependence. Consequently, leadership of the PPP covered a broad political spectrum and ranged

from Marxist-Leninists (e.g., the Jagans, Hubbard, Chase, and the Black activist, Sidney King), social democrats (e.g., L.F.S. Burnham), and non-socialist nationalists (e.g., Jainarine Singh and Hanuman Singh) (Thakur 1973: 71-72).

In February 1951, the PPP gave evidence before the Waddington Commission on Constitutional Reform, and demanded universal adult sufferage and self-government (PPP 1971: 7). The Commission recommended the introduction of universal adult sufferage.

The first general election under the new constitution was to be held in April, 1953. Until the formation of the PPP, most non-white politicians had appealed to voters on the basis of ethnicity, or personal reputation. Few had presented platforms, fewer had presented platforms which appealed to class interest, and none had carried their election campaigns to rural areas, particularly to the sugar estates (Thakur 1973: 69). The PPP changed all this. PPP candidates in the 1953 election came from almost all of the ethnic groups in Guyana (with the possible exception of Amerindians). They appealed to voters on the basis of a pro-working class, nationalist platform, and not on the basis of ethnicity. And they built party organizations in rural areas. In short, the PPP modernized politics in Guyana.

Although the success of the PPP in forging inter-ethnic unity among workers during this period is well documented, it has not received attention from plural theorists. This seems particularly odd in light of the relevance of this topic to the pluralist emphasis on divisions between ethnic or cultural groups and their effects on social and political behaviour. Consequently, there is little data on the methods used by PPP activists in building party support among different ethnic groups,

especially in rural areas. The only social scientific report of this phenomenon comes from the doctoral dissertation of an Afro-American anthropologist, Elliot P. Skinner,

Skinner's field work was undertaken in a predominantly Afro-Guyanese village, probably in East Coast Demerara, shortly after the first election in Guyana held under the "Waddington Constitution", i.e., the first election with universal adult sufferage. Skinner notes that, prior to the introduction of universal sufferage, villagers exhibited little interest in national politics since sufferage was restricted to those who had property worth $500 (B.W.I.) or a monthly income of at least $100 (B.W.I.) (1955: 215). After the introduction of the Waddington Constitution, representatives of various political parties, including the PPP, canvassed the village for votes. A former village chairman ran for the national legislature as an independent. Skinner writes,

> The election campaign, according to the villagers, was a bitter one. Each candidate predicted dire consequences if the others won. One influential Englishman (It is said that this man claimed relationship to the British Royal Family) reportedly told the villagers that if the members of a certain party [the PPP] were elected to office, the next day would see the British Navy in the river. This man was roundly booed and was the butt of bitter racial epithets. A local minister who supported one of the candidates from his pulpit, and who, on standing at the church door after the service said "Who is for Jesus shake my hand and who is for Jagan [the head of the People's Progressive Party, accused of being anti-Christian] pass", was visited by a delegation of villagers who told him to get out of politics or leave the church....
>
> Many of the villagers supported "ethnic" parties which sought special favors for members of their group. Feelings in the village were said to have run high against one prominent East Indian who reportedly stated that he would not vote for a black man. Some of the blacks in the village felt that they could never support an East Indian for office. The People's

> Progressive Party, however, deliberately eschewed ethnic differences as a means of obtaining support for their program. By using both Africans and East Indians as candidates and as campaign workers they hammered home the theme that the ethnic groups were now all British Guianese and must unite or the political power would remain in the hand of the group now in office (1955: 215-216).

In "Canalville" (Skinner's pseudonym for the village where he carried out research), the PPP received about 87% of the vote. Most of the villagers who could vote for the first time, i.e., workers and farmers, supported the PPP. The PPP candidate who received most of the votes from the Afro-Guyanese villagers was Indo-Guyanese. The former village chairman, who had the support of most of the property owners, lost his deposit. Skinner writes,

> Those parties which were unaware of the extent of the homogeneity of the goals of the different ethnic groups, and tried to cater to prejudice based on ethnic differences were defeated. The one party which appealed to the voters of Canalville as "Guianese" rather than as Chinese, Africans, or East Indians [sic] won.... (1955: 224).

> ....although the blacks and East Indians were competitors in other spheres, in politics they were united. The other parties, representing the interests of specific groups, received few votes in the village. But the P.P.P., with its non-ethnic program and its lists of candidates from all the ethnic groups had the greatest appeal for the voters of Canalville. Enough people in the village were willing to see themselves as "Guianese", a term which connotes a common cultural tradition and outlook, that this party won. The adoption by the East Indians of historically determined ideas of hostility to the planters also helped the P.P.P. (1955: 279).

Skinner writes that Janet Jagan played a special role in the election. While many villagers identified most whites (especially "plantation" whites) with the ruling class, Janet Jagan appealed to villagers because of her support for non-white workers, as evidenced during the Enmore strike. Critics of Ms. Jagan in Canalville claimed that she was the "ideological tutor" (i.e., "Communist) of the PPP. One

man in Canalville claimed that Ms. Jagan was a "tramp", because only a tramp would marry a "coolie" (Skinner 1955: 223). However, when this man revealed that the source of his "information" was a plantation white, he was "accused of being a fool and a stooge for the plantation owners" (Skinner 1955: 223). Skinner, when asked by villagers to "explain" Ms. Jagan's marriage, told them that, in the light of the university background of the Jagans, it was doubtful that she was either "low class" or a "tramp".* Skinner claims that when Janet Jagan became the first white woman in the history of British Guiana to be jailed (for her political activity) "....many of the women of Canalville could scarcely control their anger" (1955: 223).

Judging by the electoral success of the PPP in almost all rural areas in 1953, it seems safe to assume that the processes described by Skinner were widespread throughout rural Guyana. According to Landis, the PPP won approximately 50% of the Afro-Guyanese vote and about 60% of the Indo-Guyanese vote with "substantially less support from other racial groups" (1971: 145).

The main weapon of the non-PPP parties and candidates in the 1953 election was the use of propaganda techniques in the planter-controlled press, i.e., virtually all the press in Guyana, to link the PPP with Communism. Thakur writes,

> Two Sundays before the elections, all the three leading newspapers (The Daily Chronicle, Daily Argosy, and Daily Graphic) circulated a four-page supplement,

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* Some of the stories regarding Janet Jagan that are still circulated (and often believed) by opponents of the PPP are quite fantastic. According to one such story, she is related to the so-called "atom spies" Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, because her maiden name was Rosenberg.

published by the MPCA.... The article discussed the [alleged] horrors of slave camps in Russia, the dangers of communism and the [alleged] PPP plan to expropriate peasants' lands. It was widely believed by sugar and rice workers that the news supplement was paid for by the Sugar Producers' Association (SPA). This had a serious backlash as workers' logic was, "if they [the SPA] were so much against the PPP it must be good for us" (Smith, R.T. 1962: 107). According to the Robinson Commission Report:

> ....Indeed some of those engaged in the sugar industry were known to have provided money which had enabled the Man Power Citizens Association to issue with every newspaper printed on the Sunday eight days before the elections a four page supplement in which the PPP leaders were accused of being subservient to the Soviet Union (Command Paper 1954: 26, cited in Thakur 1973: 64-6.

Section 4 - The Removal of the PPP Government

The PPP won 18 out of 24 seats in the 1953 election. In several cases, whites were elected in predominantly non-white constituencies, Indo-Guyanese were elected in predominantly Afro-Guyanese constituencies, and Afro-Guyanese were elected to Indo-Guyanese constituencies (Thakur 1973: 70-71). After 133 days in office, the PPP government was prorogued and the Waddington Constitution was suspended by Britain's Conservative government "....to prevent communist subversion of Government and a dangerous crisis both in public order and in economic affairs" (Colonial Office List HMSO 1954: 65). The British government accused the PPP of "attempting to establish trade unions by legislative actions" (i.e., securing recognition for the GAWU by a poll of sugar workers), "spreading of racial hatred," "attempting to gain control over the public service" (Command Paper 8980/1953: 3-4, cited in Thakur 1973: 138). Royal Navy vessels landed an occupation force in Georgetown in October, 1953, and the PPP government was replaced by a "caretaker" government led by Sir John Savage. In 1954 the Savage government

restricted the movements of the Jagans and other left-wing PPP leaders to Georgetown (Jagan 1972: 155). Eventually, most left-wing PPP leaders were arrested and imprisoned for several months. Skinner claims that, in Canalville, opponents of the PPP were pleased with the imprisonment of the Jagans and other left-wing PPP leaders. However, PPP members remembered the threat made by the local Englishman regarding the use of British gunboats in case of a PPP victory, and "saw the revocation of their constitution as a typical act of British perfidy" (1955: 219). Villagers felt that the PPP leaders were in danger because they had opposed the plantation owners who controlled the government, and that the government was concocting lies about the PPP in order to justify their actions to the outside world (1955: 219). When the Savage government brought some of the PPP leaders to trial for violating government security regulations, L.F.S. Burnham, who had taken over the PPP leadership while Cheddi Jagan was in prison, refused to defend Jagan in court because of the PPP's conviction that the government would not allow a fair trial. Instead, Burnham made a series of "submissions" against the government's case which were quoted at length, and with great approval by villagers. According to Skinner, villagers showed an equal interest in imprisoned PPP leaders of all ethnic affiliations. Skinner noted the role of Afro-Guyanese women in village political life during this period:

> [Afro-Guyanese women - probably hucksters who sold items at stalls in Georgetown markets -] often act as couriers of the news of Georgetown court proceedings to the village and are vehement in their denunciation of the colony's governor. "That man Savage," they would say, "he too spiteful". Those women also gather nightly with the men to listen to the news and to discuss politics. One woman provides a needed function for

> the literature but farmers by reading the papers for them immediately before or after the news broadcast. The women are the ones responsible for giving a highly emotional tone to the discussion, talking headtedly about the women deprived of their husbands because Savage has sent them to Jail. (1955: 221).

Few Indo-Guyanese women took an active role in politics in rural areas at this time.

Section 5 - Ruling Class Policy, Inter-Ethnic Relations, and the Rise of the PPP

Skinners' data seem to indicate that many Guyanese workers and farmers understood the British government's ousting of the PPP government in terms of what social scientists would call the Marxist-Leninist theory of the state in bourgeois society. And while boundaries between subordinated ethnic groups were still a major factor in Guyanese social processes, they did not prevent a large degree of planning and cooperation between Indo-Guyanese, Afro-Guyanese, and Portuguese throughout Guyana within the framework of the PPP. It seems likely that if the PPP had been allowed to achieve its goal of ending disproportionate allocation, it could have instilled in Indo- and Afro-Guyanese workers and farmers a sense of confidence that continuing agricultural and industrial development would eventually have provided enough good jobs for all. This would have eradicated the economic basis of the use of ruling class racial stereotypes by Indo- and Afro-Guyanese (see Wallerstein 1972, for a similar view of the basis of inter-ethnic conflict). However, the British government insured that these possibilities were not realized by withholding effective control of the economy from successive PPP governments (see Bartels 1974).

It should also be noted that, alongside the inter-ethnic cooperation promoted by the PPP during the early 1950's, the "ethnic parties"

referred to by Skinner sought support by promising "special favors" to members of particular ethnic groups. These "ethnic parties, whose policies clearly promoted ethnic divisions and strengthened ethnic boundaries, found their main allies in the SPA. The SPA, through manipulation of the MPCA and control of all Guyana's major news media, alleged that the Jagans and the PPP were "Communistic" and "atheistic". The main beneficiaries of these press campaigns were the political parties and candidates that the SPA saw as presenting little or no threat to their interests, viz. the "ethnic parties" referred to by Skinner. Thus, inter-ethnic cooperation which characterized the rise of the PPP was accompanied by attempts by non-PPP politicians to play upon "racial" sentiments. These politicians were aided by the anti-PPP activities of the ruling class, especially the SPA (see Hubbard 1969: 62).

As we shall see in Chapter VII, it took approximately ten years for the Guyanese ruling class and the governments of Britain and the U.S., using tactics of red-baiting and 'divide-and-rule', to split the PPP along ethnic lines and weaken it to the point where a non-PPP government that was acceptable to the Guyanese ruling class and its British and U.S. allies could take power.

CHAPTER VII

CLASS, ETHNICITY, AND THE "RACE RIOTS" OF THE EARLY 1960's

Introduction

In this chapter, we shall examine the "race riots" of 1963 and 1964, in which thousands were killed, injured, or forced from their homes. In the course of this examination, we shall see that tendencies toward inter-ethnic cooperation and tendencies toward inter-ethnic conflict coexisted during this period, and that these contradictory tendencies cannot be understood without reference to the pursuit of class interests by workers and farmers in their struggle for economic and political gains, and to the actions of the ruling class and its allies in the British and U.S. governments in combatting the PPP. It shall be shown that the policies of the Guyanese ruling class, the U.S. government, and the British government involved differential allocation of economic and political benefits and burdens to different subordinated ethnic groups. At various stages, these policies were consciously aimed at splitting the PPP along ethnic lines in order to keep it from gaining power. These policies were "successful" insofar as they kept the PPP from gaining power; but they also played a major role in polarizing Guyanese politics along ethnic lines, and in promoting the "race riots" of 1963 and 1964. Thus, the predominance of inter-ethnic conflict during the early 1960's conforms to the model outlined in Chapter II insofar as this conflict was promoted by U.S. and British government policies of differential allocation which were supported by the Guyanese ruling class.

Section 1 - The Split in the PPP

The political diversity in the leadership of the PPP at the time of its 1953 electoral victory soon led to a split in the party. In 1955, L.F.S. Burnham, a British-trained lawyer of African descent, left the PPP and was followed by most moderate - i.e., non-Marxist-Leninist - PPP leaders. Although Burnham's faction eventually attracted a great deal of working class Afro-Guyanese support, most of his initial followers were the Indo-Guyanese "moderates" of the PPP leadership (Thakur 1973: 79).

Guyana was granted universal adult sufferage under a new constitution in 1956, and after electoral districts were explicitly gerrymandered by the Colonial Government in order to favour Burnham's faction (the "PPP-Burnhamite") and other non-PPP parties (Jagan 1972: 182-183), elections were held in 1957. Despite further anti-PPP press campaigns and the formation of an "all-Indian" party (the National Labour Front, or NLF) based upon opposition to Guyana's incorporation in an "all Black" West Indian Federation (Thakur 1973: 81), the PPP-Jaganite won nine out of fourteen seats, with 42.5% of the vote. The PPP-Burnhamite won three Georgetown seats with 25.5% of the vote (Landis 1971: 158). Burnham conceded the name, 'PPP', to Jagan's party, and proceeded to form a new party, the People's National Congress (PNC). Although the NLF was led by Lionel Luckhoo, a famous Indo-Guyanese lawyer who sponsored an "anti-subversion bill" aimed at keeping Marxist-Leninist literature out of Guyana, the NLF won only one seat with 11.5% of the vote. The United Democratic Party (UDP) composed largely of Afro-Guyanese civil servants, professionals, and small businessmen, won one seat with 8% of the vote. Cheddi Jagan received 23,443 votes in his

Corentyne constituency, more than the total received by the five elected candidates from the non-PPP parties (PPP 1971: 30).

It is often claimed that, in the election campaign, MLF candidates used the slogan "Vote Apan Jaht". The two Hindi words in this phrase, "Apan Jaht", can be roughly translated as "Your Own Kind"; hence, the slogan can be interpreted as "vote your own ethnic group", or "vote your own race". It has also been claimed that, in the 1957 election campaign, PPP activists used the phrase, "Vote Apan Jaht" (Landis 1971: 159). While it is difficult to find evidence which would conclusively support such allegations, it seems probable that NLF activists did, in fact, use the slogan in a 'racial' sense in light of their openly-expressed fear that Guyana's Indo-Guyanese population would be "swallowed up" in a "Black tide of immigration" if Guyana were to become part of the British West Indian Federation. However, it is more difficult to determine whether or not PPP activists generally used this slogan, especially in light of the publicly-declared intent of PPP leaders to build a party based upon class rather than 'race'.

Thakur points out that the issues and results of the 1957 election were mainly ideological in nature, i.e., left vs. right, rather than 'racial', in spite of the ethnic appeals of the NLF.

> ....In Georgetown, Indo-Guianese candidates in two constituencies (including the one contested by Burnham) won with slender majorities in a predominantly Afro-Guianese constituency running against Lionel Luckhoo.... leader of the NLF, and John Fernandes ("honest John"), a Guianese of Portuguese origin, who contested the election as an independent candidate, both of whom were wealthy conservatives. ....Fred Bowman (Afro-Guianese), a PPP (Jaganite) candidate, won against Dr. J.P. Latchmansingh (an Indo-Guianese who had joined forces with Burnham since the split in 1955) in a predominantly Indo-Guianese constituency.

> After the results of the 1957 elections, Burnham felt that if he were to become a viable alternative he must change his strategy. In August, 1957, he conceded the name PPP. "Dr. Jagan is entitled to it. He won" (Simms 1966: 141). Later he announced that his party was to be named People's National Congress (PNC) and its paper, New Nation. In some probably serious self-criticism, he saw that Dr. J.P. Latchman-singh and Jainarine Singh (and later Neville Bissamber, Indo-Guianese) could not appeal to sugar workers' support as anticipated and that their role in the Party was to maintain a multi-racial outlook. It was probably at this stage that Burnham felt that if his Party's support was to increase significantly, he had to join forces with the more conservative UDP which was made up of the professionals and middle class League of Coloured People (LCP). In 1958, the PNC and UDP merged (1973: 82-83).

Between the PPP electoral victory in 1957 and the next general election in 1961, political issues came to be defined more and more in ethnic terms. Specifically, Burnham's PNC attracted many followers among middle-class Afro-Guyanese, Afro-Guyanese workers, and the Afro-Guyanese unemployed in Georgetown and in the villages of East Coast Demerara. It was alleged by PNC activists that Jagan's government was allocating a disproportionately large amount of government funds for social and economic development in rural areas which would mainly benefit Indo-Guyanese, and thus win their political support for the PPP (Thakur 1973: 245-246). This interpretation is unjustified in light of the fact that several major economic projects which would have benefited Afro-Guyanese workers in Georgetown and Mackenzie were stifled by the British Colonial Office (Jagan 1972: 189-190; Reno 1964: 31, 45, 49, 63; Bartels 1974: 73-81). These projects included a glass factory to be built with Hungarian assistance, a rice-bran oil factory to be developed by the German Democratic Republic, and a hydro-electric and goodpulp project to be developed with Cuban aid. In fact, it was only with difficulty that the PPP government gained sufficient funds

for expansion of existing Colonial Office plans for agricultural development in certain rural areas (Reno 1964: 63, 81-82). The PPP, realizing that the British government would not allow "Communist" assistance for development in Guyana, opted for the only alternative that did not involve strengthening of foreign multi-national control of the Guyanese economy, viz., agricultural development which would increase the numbers of Guyanese farmers with small holdings (see Hanley 1975). Thus, the PPP development program of 1957-60 was not "racially" motivated. While Eric Hanley accepts this interpretation of the PPP development plan, he also alleges that lower-echelon PPP officials dispensed agricultural land exclusively to East Indians (1975).

In any case, the allegations of PNC activists regarding the so-called 'racial' development program of the PPP played an important role in attracting many Afro-Guyanese, including many members of the predominantly Afro-Guyanese Trade Union Council (TUC) in Georgetown, to Burnham's cause (Landis 1971: 166-170); Despres 1967: 245-260; Thakur 1973: 86; Henfrey 1972: 67). Many of these PNC allegations involved ruling class racial stereotypes of Indo-Guyanese. The GAWU, composed mainly of rural, Indo-Guyanese PPP supporters, was excluded from the TUC and could not effectively combat the increasingly anti-PPP sentiments among many TUC members.

As the PPP was identified more and more and as an "Indian Party", many middle class Afro-Guyanese, who had supported the PPP's independence struggle when it was led by Jagan and Burnham, joined the PNC. They were afraid that, in an independent Guyana led by Jagan and the PPP, the state apparatus would be dismantled and rebuilt in such a way that Afro-Guyanese government employees would be replaced by Indo-

Guyanese. At the same time, the constant barrage of newspaper and unofficial government claims that the PPP was Communistic and atheistic must have had some effect on middle-class Afro-Guyanese, whose class positions often depended to some extent, on retaining ruling class values and attitudes. These attitudes and values emphatically excluded atheism and Communism, as well as government interference with private property. Middle-class Afro-Guyanese in Georgetown and East Coast Demerara became Burnham's most fervent supporters, and remain so today.

This period also saw the emergence of a new political party, the United Force (UF), led by Peter D'Aguiar, a wealthy, right-wing businessman of Portuguese descent (Glasgow 1970: 119). Thakur writes,

> The leadership of the UF was made up primarily of middle and upper class Indo-Guianese and Portuguese who were businessmen and "labour leaders" who had alienated themselves from the rural community. The UF, because of its middle class and Catholic outlook, hoped to attract a significant proportion of the votes from the "mixed" population. D'Aguiar's strategy was to appeal to Hindu and Muslim religious leaders through which he developed a massive anti-communist campaign. In his efforts to woo Indo-Guianese votes away from the PPP in rural districts, he invited a relative of the late Mahatma Gandhi to speak on the "evils of communism". The Christian anti-Communist Crusade, headed by Drs. Fred Schwartz and Joosef Slusis, paid six visits in the fourteen months prior to the 1961 elections and admitted spending about $76,000 (BWI) in their anti-communist campaign (1973: 87).

D'Aguiar also became a strong supporter of Moral Rearmament, a U.S.-based organization which has been subsidized by the CIA (Mader 1970: 10).

In the 1961 election, the PPP won 20 out of 35 seats, with 42.6% of the vote, the PNC won 11 seats with 41% of the vote, and the UF won 4 seats with 16.3% of the vote. The PPP won all its seats in rural areas, and the PNC won 8 out of its 11 seats in the urban areas.

The UF won 2 of its seats in Georgetown and 2 in the interior. Most of the voters in the interior who supported the UF were Amerindians whose priests at Roman Catholic missions had instructed them to support D'Aguiar (Thakur 1973: 89).

The results of the 1961 election were largely 'racial' in character. Most PPP support came from Indo-Guyanese, and most PNC support came from Afro-Guyanese (Landis 1971: 174). Landis writes,

> The P.P.P. made one decision before the 1961 elections that its leaders have since admitted was a serious mistake: it did not nominate candidates for six constituencies which it was sure the opposition parties would win. Four of these were in Georgetown, one in New Amsterdam, and one in the interior. The failure of the P.P.P. to run candidates in these constituencies gave the impression that the P.P.P. was not interested in the votes of urban Africans and Portuguese and also reduced the P.P.P's percentage of the total vote, which detracted from the legitimacy of the government formed by the P.P.P. after the election (1971: 171).

Section 2 - The Strikes of 1962 and 1963, and the Emergence of Inter-Ethnic Violence

In January, 1962, the new PPP government introduced a budget which included a 45% capital gains tax designed to block the outflow of capital, an import tax on imported luxury items, and a 5% compulsory saving scheme on earnings over $100 per month (Thakur 1973: 90-91). The SPA and UF-controlled press immediately attacked the budget with such headlines as "GOVT TO SQUEEZE DOLLARS FROM WORKERS", "TAX AVALANCHE WILL CRUSH WORKING CLASS", and "SLAVE WHIP BUDGET" (Thakur 1973: 91). In February, a strike to protest the budget was called by the TUC, whose membership consisted mainly of Afro-Guyanese trade unionists in Georgetown. The strike was supported by Burnham, D'Aguiar and the Chamber of Commerce, which was composed mainly of UF supporters. Thakur writes,

> On the morning of February 16, the President of the TUC, Mr. Richard Ishmael a U.S.-trained Indo-Guyanese trade unionist succeeded in withdrawing all essential services in Georgetown .... Fires were started simultaneously at Water and Regent Stressts Georgetown's main commercial areas and, with the fire, looting began. British troops arrived in the city in the late afternoon and by 8:00 p.m. most of the city was quiet. By that time, 56 premises were destroyed by fire, 21 were damaged, and 66 were damaged and looted; 5 vehicles belonging to the police were damaged. The total loss suffered was approximately $40 million (BWI). One senior police officer and four civilians were killed, with 41 other people injured (Jagan 1966: 215). The whole occurrence was less than a day's affair... (1973: 92).

A Royal Commission (the Wynn-Parry Commission) was appointed to look into the cause of the disturbance, and concluded that,

> ....the real motive force behind Mr. Burnham's assault was a desire to assert himself in public life and establish a more important and rewarding position for himself by bringing about Dr. Jagan's downfall. The weapon he employed was the argument that the budget contained measures calculated to inflict hardship on the working classes by increasing the cost of living (Cited by PPP 1971: 41).

The Commission went on to point out that the PPP budget was not, in fact, calculated to raise the cost of living for workers, and that the attitude of the UF was more " onest" than that of the PNC since the UF represented the businessmen and the "middle classes" who were obviously going to be affected by the new taxes on capital gains, luxury items, and property holdings. Mr. Burnham's attitude was labelled "callous and remorseless" (Cited by PPP 1971: 4). Finally, the Commission concluded that,

> There is no evidence of the disturbances being the direct result of racial conflict, though they contain measures of tension between the East Indian and African races which had lately become noticeable and acted as a contributory factor (Cited in Thakur 1973: 93).

Another crisis occurred in 1963 when the PPP government introduced a labour relations bill modeled on the U.S. "Wagner Act" adopted

by the Roosevelt Administration. The labour relations bill would have allowed trade unionists to choose, by election, the union to represent them. Naturally, implementation of this bill would have resulted in recognition of the pro-PPP GAWU. Again, the TUC, supported by the PNC, the UF, and the Chamber of Commerce, called a general strike on the grounds that the proposed legislation would give the Minister of Labour far-reaching powers which would destroy the "free trade union movement" (Thakur 1973: 96). It should be noted that, ten years earlier, both Burnham and the TUC had supported a labour relations bill that was almost identical to the 1963 legislation (Thakur 1973: 96).

The strike lasted for 80 days, although many union members who were sympathetic to the PPP government remained on their jobs (Thakur 1973: 98). As in 1962, the media mounted a concerted attack on the PPP. Thakur writes,

> The presence of two [Soviet] freighters loading rice at Georgetown harbour gave the pretext for violence. Rumours that there were arms aboard the ships were spread among the crowds gathered at the wharves [where an inter-union dispute between strikers and non-strikers was in progress]. The angry crowd started throwing fire bombs, stones, bricks, and bottles at the police and the [Rice Marketing Board] offices. The crowd was pushed back by the police, and moved towards Water Street, breaking into stores and looting them; the result was that one boy was shot and killed, 20 people were wounded and over one hundred arrested, with damage totalling over $100,000 (1973: 101).

These events served as a prelude to inter-ethnic violence. Thakur continues,

> Racial overtones became apparent when the [PPP] Government declared a state of emergency in order to maintain essential services and replace fuel for rice farmers. The racial accusation derives from the fact that the majority of "scabs" were Indo-Guianese. The TUC and the opposition forces including the media, did not hesitate to publicise the racial implications and charged the government with attempting to break the strike on "racial and

political grounds".

> ....Claude Christian [the Minister of Home Affairs], died of a heart attack.... [At his funeral], bricks and bottles were thrown...,and afterwards several Indo-Guianese shops were looted (1973: 102).

Incidents of inter-ethnic violence continued in Georgetown throughout the remainder of the strike, and the TUC alleged that, in rural areas, attacks on Afro-Guyanese by Indo-Guyanese were not reported by the police (Thakur 1973: 104).

Although the PPP government agreed to meet all the demands of the strikers, the TUC refused to agree to a settlement. Robert Willis, a representative of the British Trade Union Council who had been sent to Guyana in order to help settle the strike, concluded that the Guyana TUC purposely prolonged the strike in order to bring down Jagan's government (Thakur 1973: 105-106).

A major factor which allowed the TUC to prolong the strike was the food and money it received for "strike relief" from U.S. unions and U.S.-controlled "international" labour organizations. Such organizations had been active in Guyana since 1952 (see Chase 1964: 206), and included the Inter-American Regional Organization of Workers (ORIT), International Affairs Unit of the ALF-CIO (Henfrey 1972: 65), the American Institute for Free Labour Development (AIFLD), and the Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, which worked through the British Public Service Institute. These organizations provided money, food, vehicles, loudspeakers, anti-communist films, move projectors, training in the U.S. for TUC leaders such as Richard Ishmael, and U.S. advisers to the TUC throughout the early 1960's. It was later admitted that most of the funds and services which these organizations provided came from the CIA through the Gotham Foundation in New York (Radosh 1969:

401-404). In pursuing this policy, the Kennedy Administration was motivated by the realization that if Guyana were to become independent while Jagan was in office, the PPP would soon be able to consolidate power and initiate an economic development program similar to Cuba's, i.e., based upon military and economic ties with the socialist countries. Kennedy, who had suffered politically after the abortive Bay-of-Pigs Invasion, was unwilling to allow this to happen (see Walton 1972: 210-213).

Section 3 - The Electoral System of "Proportional Representation" and the "Race Riots" of 1964

Despite the CIA-inspired attempt to bring down Jagan's government during the 1963 strike, Robert Willis' open criticism of the TUC and its U.S. allies, and his threat to air such criticism in the U.S. and British press, forced the TUC to end the strike (Thakur 1973: 106). Thus, Jagan remained in office, and the Kennedy Administration was faced with a dilemma: to keep Jagan out of power by supporting the British Colonial presence in Guyana would harm the image of the U.S. as a supporter of decolonization; on the other hand, Britain had pledged to grant Guyana independence within a "reasonable time" (see Jagan 1972: 281), and it appeared that Jagan and the PPP would be able to win elections indefinitely. Thus, an independent Guyana with a PPP government seemed inevitable (Alan 1974: 25). The solution to this problem, as formulated by U.S. policy-makers, was the imposition of an electoral system of proportional representation (PR), which would allow non-PPP parties to form a coalition government. In his book A Thousand Days, John F. Kennedy in the White House, Arthur M. Schlesinger, who was one of Kennedy's closest advisers, wrote,

> ....in May, 1962, Burnham came to Washington ....Burnham's visit left the feeling as I reported to the President, that 'an independent British Guiana under Burnham (if Burnham will commit himself to a multi-racial policy) would cause us many fewer problems than an independent British Guiana under Jagan.' And the way was open to bring it about, because Jagan's parliamentary strength was larger than his popular strength: he had won 57 percent of the seats on the basis of 42.7 percent of the vote. An obvious solution would be to establish a system of proportional representation. This, after prolonged discussion, the British government finally did in October 1963; and elections held finally at the end of 1964 produced a coalition government under Burnham (Cited in Jagan 1972: 378).

Although Duncan Sandys, the British Colonial Secretary, justified the imposition of the PR system on the grounds that it would force coalitions between political parties and make it easier for new political groupings to form on a multi-ethnic basis, implementation of the PR system had precisely the opposite effect. Under the PR system, the whole country became one constituency where candidates could exploit ethnic issues to attract votes; most of the new parties that were formed immediately before the 1964 election were not multi-ethnic, but were organized along ethnic lines (Thakur 1973: 111-112; Landis 1971: 249).

There can be little doubt that imposition of PR was <u>deliberately aimed</u> at keeping the PPP out of office and at promoting inter-ethnic conflict which would further split the PPP. Sandys and other British policy-makers must have been aware that the Robertson Commission Report of 1954 had warned that the imposition of a PR system in Guyana could <u>only</u> be interpreted as an attempt to keep the PPP out of office (Cited in Jagan 1972: 282). The Robertson Commission Report can hardly be viewed as biased in favor of the PPP in light of its attempt to justify suspension of the Waddington Constitution and the ousting of the PPP

government in 1953. In short, the evidence strongly suggests that imposition of the PR system was a deliberate and conscious attempt by the British Government (and probably the U.S. Government as well) to 'divide-and-rule'.

The PPP called upon its rural constituents to protest the imposition of the PR system by staging a "freedom march" to Georgetown. Although the marchers, who were mostly Indo-Guyanese, had to pass through several areas occupied mainly by Afro-Guyanese PNC supporters, (e.g., Buxton and other East Coast Demerara villages) no major incidents of inter-ethnic violence occurred (Thakur 1973: 113). While the "freedom march" received massive support, the British Government did not change the PR system. At this point, the struggle assumed the familiar form of a strike for recognition by the GAWU which was opposed by the TUC, Chamber of Commerce, SPA, the PNC and the major media.

The strike started at Leonora in West Coast Demerara, and by March 3, the GAWU called a general strike in the sugar industry. Although there were incidents of violence between GAWU members and MPCA members, and between GAWU members and strike-breakers during the first two months of the strike, these incidents usually involved members of the same ethnic group, i.e., Indo-Guyanese. According to Joseph Landis,

> The reason for this is that the GAWU concentrated most of its violence on Indian non-strikers and MPCA activists and vigilante groups contained more Indians than Africans. Thus most of the violence during the first two months of the strike was violence between Indians. There was a provocative situation racially since many of the strike-breakers and non-striking workers (especially the sugar factory workers) were Africans and most of the police who were used to break up squatting demonstrators and protect non-striking

> workers were Africans.* The GAWU and the PPP did not play up to the racial implications of the attempt to provoke racial clashes during the first two months of the strike, perhaps because this would have brought a large number of non-sugar workers into the struggle on the side of the MPCA (1971: 264).

The continuation of the strike brought the worst inter-ethnic violence in Guyanese colonial history. Thakur provides the following chronology of incidents which occurred from March to July 1964.

> On March 6th, a non-striking worker drove a tractor and killed a woman and injured fourteen others.
>
> On March 23, a bomb was thrown at a school bus which was carrying children of the managerial staff at Plantation Enmore and a Portuguese child was killed.
>
> Between May 22 and 24, four Indo- and three Afro-Guianese were killed on the East and West Coast Demerara.
>
> On May 25, all the Indo-Guianese from Wisman/ Mackenzie area were forced to evacuate their homes. The result was that three Indo-Guianese were beaten to death, 190 homes were destroyed by fire and one Afro-Guianese was shot by the Police (primarily because of this incident Janet Jagan resigned her position as Minister of Home Affairs and accused the Governor and the Commissioner of Police of allowing the situation to deteriorate).
>
> On June 12, Arthur Abraham, a Portuguese senior civil servant and a known UF supporter, was burnt to death in his home together with seven of his eight children.
>
> On June 13, the Governor announced the detention of 28 PPP activists including the Deputy Prime Minister, Head of GAWU and two PNC activists. Two days later, four more PPP activists were detained including the Minister of Education.
>
> On July 5, four Indo-Guianese were beaten to death on the East Coast Demerara.

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* The parallels between this situation and earlier instances in Guyanese colonial history where Black police were used to suppress Indo-Guyanese strikers should not be overlooked.

> On July 6 Guianese witnessed the worst of all the tragedies. Sun Chapman, a launch that operated from Georgetown to Mackenzie (now Linden) and Wismar sank after an explosion. Approximately 40 persons died or drowned from the explosion.
>
> A week later, a bomb was thrown in a cinema that was showing two Indian films (I was in the cinema) where three persons were killed and several wounded.
>
> Before the strike ended, the SPA announced that over 650 acres of cane worth over one million dollars was destroyed by arsonists.
>
> On July 25, the GAWU called off its recognition strike (1973: 116-117).*

Cheddi Jagan sums up the results of the strike as follows:

> About 2,668 families involving approximately 15,000 persons were forced to move from their houses and settle in communities of their own ethnic group. The large majority were Indians. Over 1,400 homes were destroyed by fire. A total of 176 people were killed and 920 were injured. Damage to property was estimated at about $4.3 million and the number of displaced persons who became unemployed reached 1,342 (1972: 311).

The memory of the 1964 violence is still vivid among Indo- and Afro-Guyanese who lived through it. Villages of Indo-Guyanese "squatters" who were forced out of predominantly Afro-Guyanese areas still exist, and are usually easily recognizable because the quality of housing in them is often lower than the quality of "average" Indo-Guyanese housing. Many Indo- and Afro-Guyanese who lived through the inter-ethnic violence retain a great deal of bitterness and anger over atrocities that were committed in 1964.

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* In 1976 the GAWU was officially recognized, and the sugar industry was nationalized. Recent reports indicate, however, that the PNC government may have 'broken' the GAWU in a three-month strike which began in late 1977.

Section 4 - The PNC and Independence

The first election under the PR system was held in December 1964 when the legacy of inter-ethnic bitterness from the 1964 riots was still most fresh. Ninety-three percent of Indo-Guyanese voters supported the PPP and ninety-five percent of Afro-Guyanese voters supported the PNC (Landis 1971: 284). The PPP won 45.8% of the total vote and 24 seats in the House of Assembly; the PNC received 40.5% of the vote and won 22 seats in the assembly; and the UF received 12.4% of the vote and won 7 seats. The UF obtained a greater percentage of Indo-Guyanese votes than the total obtained by new parties which appealed exclusively to Indo-Guyanese on the basis of ethnicity or religion, and the PPP was the only party to increase its popular vote (Thakur 1973: 120). After the election, the PNC and the UF formed a coalition government under Burnham's leadership.

Burnham's coalition government took immediate steps to achieve independence (which was granted in 1966) and to insure that all alleged instances of government patronage toward Indo-Guyanese PPP supporters were removed. Burnham went far toward achieving these ends by performing one significant political-economic act - viz., cutting off Guyanese rice exports to Cuba. This move had the double effect of assuring the U.S. and British governments of Burnham's "anti-Communism" and of crippling the Indo-Guyanese rice industry which, up to 1965, had exported 29% of its crop to Cuba at prices higher than current world market prices (Alan 1973: 25).

Burnham has remained in power since 1964. Through highly questionable electoral procedures, Burnham's PNC was able to form a majority government after the 1968 election (Sunday Times, December 15,

1968). Since that time, Burnham has consolidated power by building a police force and army (the Guyana Defense Force, or GDF) composed mainly of Afro-Guyanese PNC supporters. Much of the equipment used by the police is supplied by the U.S. Government, while most of the weapons used by the GDF are British-made. In the late 1960's and early 1970's, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) provided $916 million (U.S.) toward equipping and training Guyana's security forces (NACLA 1973: 26). While this may seem to be a relatively small figure, it must be remembered that Guyana is a relatively small nation, and that its population is concentrated on the coast in such a way that it can be easily controlled by security forces (Alan 1973: 26).

Section 5 - Foreign Intervention and Inter-Ethnic Conflict in 1964

In assessing Guyanese social and political development in the early 1960's, one change seems especially significant: up to 1962 policies and practices which often promoted antagonism between ethnic groups in Guyana's working class had been dictated mainly by the Guyanese ruling class with support from the British government. Around 1963, or perhaps earlier, the policy-making initiative passed from the hands of the corporate plantation owners and their allies in the British government, to the U.S. government. It can be argued that the Kennedy Administration also represented the interests of the owners of major productive resources in Guyana, viz., the U.S. corporations and banks that owned controlling interests in Alcan, and thus Alcan's bauxite extraction operation at Mackenzie (see Park 1973: 131-134), as well as the corporate owners of the Reynolds extraction operation at Kwakwani. However, in terms of direct investment, the stake of British capital

in Guyana (i.e., Bookers) was much greater than the stake of U.S. capital. And while the U.S. government and major corporations were no doubt interested in protecting Alcan's Mackenzie operation from nationalization by a PPP Government in an independent Guyana, there were other economic and strategic considerations which were probably more important in U.S. government decision-making. For example, the U.S. is not self-sufficient in bauxite or platinum, both of which are essential for the manufacture of modern weapons-systems, and both of which are imported from the Caribbean area. Bauxite is imported from Guyana, Surinam, and Jamaica, and platinum, which is an essential industrial catalyst, is imported from Colombia. The only alternative major sources of platinum are South Africa and the Soviet Union. U.S. strategic planners probably realized that a Soviet military base in an independent Guyana under a PPP government would pose the threat of interdiction of U.S. supplies of strategic raw materials (i.e., bauxite and platinum) in time of war. These considerations, plus the example of the Cuban Revolution, probably played a key role in the U.S. government decision to step up CIA activities in Guyana in the early 1960's. The conclusion that such considerations are important to U.S. planners is underlined by the fact that they are mentioned in a study sponsored by the U.S. Council on Foreign Relations, a key policy-making body in the U.S. government (see NACLA 1971: 2-6; Crassweller 1972: 47-48; Colhoun 1973: 22; Alan 1973: 22-27).

The transfer of policy-making initiative to the U.S. government in the early 1960's did not represent any basic change in policy aims. While British policy aims mainly involved the protection of Guyanese and British ruling class interests within Guyana (i.e., access to cheap

labour and cheap raw materials, by keeping wages low and preventing PPP moves toward acquisition of power and nationalization), U.S. policy aims involved protection of so-called "free world" strategic and economic interests not only in Guyana, but in the entire Caribbean region. One might say that while the shift in policy-making initiative represented a transition from a tactical to a strategic perspective, the basic policy aims remained the same - viz., the protection of corporate investment, access to cheap labour and raw materials, and exclusion of Soviet/Cuban influence.

It should be noted that, in spite of the success of the U.S. and British governments in splitting the PPP along ethnic lines, the events of 1964 were not characterized exclusively by inter-ethnic violence and hostility. At the height of the inter-ethnic violence of 1964, many Afro-Guyanese in Georgetown expressed sympathy with the Indo-Guyanese strikers in the face of intimidation from Afro-Guyanese PNC supporters. Landis reports that

> Some of the communities that escaped the violence or ended it before the violence ceased in other areas - e.g., in the Essequibo and Corentyne areas - did so by forming local, and sometimes multi-racial, peace or vigilance committees to keep watch over all outsiders who came into their communities (1971: 278).

Perhaps most importantly, both PPP and PNC leaders and activists appealed to class interests rather than ethnic interests during the election of 1964 (Landis 1971: 304). While there were claims that a PNC government would exploit Indo-Guyanese workers (Landis 1971: 281-282), and that a PPP government would exploit Afro-Guyanese workers, each party also claimed that, once it was in power, it would build socialism for all workers, irrespective of "race". According to a survey undertaken by Landis in 1967,

> A solid majority of Indians and Africans in Guyana favor socialism, but they are unable to agree on which party is more socialist. Sixty-nine percent of the Indian respondents and 73 percent of the Africans were in favor of socialism; but 85 per cent of the Indians thought the P.P.P. was more socialist, while 70 percent of the Africans thought that the P.N.C. was more of a socialist party (1971: 317).

Thus, even during the aftermath of the worst inter-ethnic violence in Guyanese colonial history, the presence of working class consciousness based upon opposition to the ruling class, could be discerned. As in previous periods of Guyanese colonial history, tendencies toward working class consciousness and struggle which united workers and farmers in subordinated ethnic groups coexisted with tendencies toward racist ideology and inter-ethnic conflict between subordinated ethnic groups; and the latter tendencies were largely engendered by the policies of the U.S. government, the British government, and the Guyanese ruling class.

According to the model outlined in Chapter II, conflict and cooperation between subordinated ethnic groups throughout Guyanese colonial history stemmed from contradictory ruling class policies. When the ruling class imposed more-or-less uniform economic burdens upon all subordinated ethnic groups in order to maximize profits, this often promoted unity between these groups in political and economic struggles against the ruling class. On the other hand, the ruling class and its allies often pursued a policy of differential allocation of economic and political benefits and burdens to different subordinated ethnic groups in order to maintain its monopoly of political and economic power. These policies had the effect of promoting conflict between subordinated ethnic groups, strengthening ethnic boundaries between them, and inhibiting unity between them in political and economic

struggles against the ruling class. Such divisive effects were constantly reinforced by the ruling class racist ideology which pervaded all facets of Guyanese society. As we have seen in this chapter, the predominance of inter-ethnic conflict in the early 1960's stemmed from such policies of differential allocation. Specifically, the British colonial government, with the support of the Guyanese ruling class, limited the PPP economic development program in such a way that Indo-Guyanese benefited while Afro-Guyanese did not. This policy had the effect of diverting working class Afro-Guyanese support from the PPP, especially when the PPP development program was "explained" by PNC activists in terms of ruling class racial stereotypes of Indo-Guyanese. Later, the British and U.S. governments, with the support of the Guyanese ruling class, imposed the PR system. Insofar as British Colonial Office officials had warned in 1954 that imposition of a PR system would primarily benefit Burnham and his Afro-Guyanese supporters while crippling the predominantly Indo-Guyanese PPP, this policy was a deliberate attempt to 'divide-and-rule'. We have seen how the policies described above contributed to the growth of ethnic divisions in Guyanese politics, and to the "race riots" of 1963 and 1964. Thus, the predominance of conflict between subordinated ethnic groups in the early 1960's conforms to the model outlined in Chapter II.

Hopefully, the foregoing chapters have demonstrated how the co-existence of contradictory tendencies toward conflict and cooperation between members of different subordinated ethnic groups was related to ruling class policy. In 1847-48, this involved the use of economic sanctions which forced East Indian and Portuguese indentured labourers to break solidarity with Black plantation workers in a strike. The

ensuing bitterness between East Indians and Blacks marked the origin of the ethnic boundary between Afro- and Indo-Guyanese. In spite of this division, Indo- and Afro- Guyanese workers and farmers were able to act in concert in several significant political and economic struggles against the ruling class. These included the strikes and 'riots' of 1905 and 1924, and the rise of the PPP. These instances of concerted action were usually responses to ruling class attempts to impose roughly uniform economic burdens - e.g., wage-cuts or union-busting - in the face of capitalist crises. In these struggles, workers and farmers were united, to some degree, by working class consciousness.

On the other hand, instances of conflict between subordinated ethnic groups in the working class were invariably promoted by ruling class policies of differential allocation. In some cases, selectively applied economic burdens forced workers from a particular ethnic group to break solidarity with workers from other ethnic groups in political and industrial struggles against the ruling class; in other cases, economic benefits given to workers from a particular ethnic group (but not given to workers from other ethnic groups) promoted competition for scarce resources between subordinated ethnic groups. Invariably, the "success" or "failure" of the ethnic group in question was "explained" by workers in terms of ruling class racist ideology and stereotypes. Thus, ruling class policies of differential allocation, and the permeation of Guyanese society with ruling class racist ideology by government, clergy, and media, promoted conflict and reinforced ethnic boundaries between subordinated ethnic groups. This reduced the possibility of successful cooperation between workers and farmers from

different ethnic groups in struggles against the ruling class. In the concluding chapter, we shall see that the contradictory tendencies toward conflict and cooperation between different ethnic groups in the labouring classes which characterized Guyanese colonial history have also characterized post-colonial Guyanese society.

CHAPTER VIII

CLASS AND ETHNICITY IN POST-COLONIAL GUYANESE SOCIETY

Introduction

In this chapter it shall be shown that tendencies toward class struggle based upon working class consciousness and Marxist-Leninist ideology, and tendencies toward inter-ethnic conflict based upon racist ideology, continue to coexist in post-colonial Guyanese society. Economic scarcity and the different social and economic positions of different ethnic groups are still often "explained" in terms of the racial stereotypes of the former ruling class and its various allies. Ethnic boundaries continue to exist, and there is inter-ethnic conflict over scarce resources. As in the past, the basis of these phenomena is disproportionate allocation of scarce resources by the government. However, disproportionate allocation is no longer practiced by a ruling class overtly supported by British state power. Rather, the PNC regime practices disproportionate allocation in order to retain the support of its Afro-Guyanese constituents (see Hanley 1975, and Despres 1975). Without such support, the PNC's power would be seriously jeopardized. This disproportionate allocation has strengthened ethnic boundaries and reproduced political conflict which follows ethnic lines. Such cleavage was prominent during the national election of 1973.

At the same time, there have been significant instances of cooperation between large numbers of Indo- and Afro-Guyanese workers and farmers. The basis for such unity in 1973 was the fact that Bookers owned large amounts of unused residential land. An Afro-Guyanese organization called ASCRIA (African Society for Cultural Relations with

Independent Africa) demanded redistribution of this land to the landless, and an ASCRIA call for squatters to occupy the land in order to enforce this demand was answered by many Afro- and Indo-Guyanese. Thousands of squatters occupied Bookers' land for several weeks. As in colonial times, the basis for such inter-ethnic cooperation was struggle against the owners of the major means of production - viz., Bookers.

No attempt will be made in this chapter to determine whether or not recent instances of inter-ethnic conflict and cooperation conform to the model outlined in Chapter II. Since political and economic power are no longer monopolized by a largely European ruling class supported directly by a major colonial power, the model of inter-ethnic conflict and cooperation outlined in Chapter II is not directly applicable to contemporary Guyanese social processes. However, as we shall see in the remainder of this chapter, elements of this model - notably the contradictory tendencies toward inter-ethnic conflict and cooperation, class conflict, working class consciousness, the racist ideology of the former ruling class, government policies of differential allocation, and the involvement of the British and U.S. governments - are still useful for understanding contemporary Guyanese social and political processes.

In the remainder of this chapter, the election of 1973 and the squatters' movement will be examined. These events illustrate continuing tendencies toward inter-ethnic cooperation and conflict in post-colonial Guyanese society.

Section 1 - The Squatters' Movement

In order to understand the squatters' movement of 1973, it is necessary to know something of the background of ASCRIA. Despres

writes,

> The forerunner of ASCRIA is the Society for Racial Equality, essentially a black separatist movement organized by Sidney King* (now called Eusi Kwayana) in the early 1960's, when Guyana suffered wave upon wave of racial rioting and killing ... As a Separatist movement, the Society for Racial Equality sought to have Guyana partitioned into a consociation of three territorial units: one reserved for African, one for East Indians, and a third to contain a voluntarily mixed population of whites and non-whites, including Africans and Indians who might not want to live among their own. Failing to win support for this scheme, the Society for Racial Equality incorporated elements of the League of Coloured Peoples and reorganized itself as a black power movement.
>
> ....ASCRIA is militantly black. However, in defining black it combines elements of race, social class and cultural elements that are visibly African. Membership rules are said to prescribe a six-month course in black studies as a prerequisite for full membership status.... East Indians, Portuguese, Chinese, Amerindians, or whites cannot belong at all.... it maintains a rather extensive educational program, importing materials and sometimes teacher-volunteers from Africa and the United States. This educational program is based in Georgetown but it reaches into several rural areas of black population concentration. It offers lectures in history, journalism, economics, cooperative organization, and even agricultural practice. It encourages the adoption of African names, values and dress. It also encourages the use of what are thought to be African rituals in regard to religious practice, weddings, funerals, and other celebrations (1975: 102-103).

In the early 1970's ASCRIA members claimed that rich Guyanese, foreign businessmen, and corporate personnel living in Guyana, had achieved an "Anglo-American" life-style at the expense of Guyanese workers and farmers who, as a result, remained materially impoverished. Pre-colonial African society, they claimed, lacked exploitation of this type, but was destroyed, in the Old World, by the slave trade and colonialism. Like many proponents of "African socialism" in independent

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* Sidney King was, at one time, a PPP activist.

African nations, whose actions they follow with interest (see I. Cox 1966), ASCRIA members advocated a return to the sort of society that they believed to have existed in pre-Colonial Africa (i.e., a non-stratified society, free from exploitation, and free from the sort of class structure that exists in contemporary Guyanese society). They also believed that achievement of such a society in Guyana, as in African nations, sometimes involved violent disruptions of the existing social order. They sought alternatives to the "Anglo-American" life-style that were allegedly similar to aspects of pre-Colonial African culture (i.e., "Afro" names, clothing and hair styles; political leadership by "councils of elders"; participation in religions with African survivals, etc.).

The influence of ASCRIA and Eusi Kwayana rivaled that of Prime Minister Forbes Burnham among working class Afro-Guyanese, particularly in the bauxite mining town of Linden. Despres writes,

> Many of ASCRIA's members are prominently placed in government and in such public corporations as the National Bank of Guyana and the National Cooperative Bank (1975: 103).

The squatters' movement was started in December 1972, by ASCRIA. Rickey Singh, a well-known journalist, who worked for the Guyana Graphic at that time, provided the following description of the development of the squatters' movement:

> [In early December, 1972] Eusi Kwayana....sent to the Minister of Local Government, Mr. Abdul Salim, a letter stating that "all plans by the government to buy land from the sugar plantation should be stopped", as this was a "pre-nationalization policy" which could no longer be supported. The letter then went on to state: "Land required by the coastal villages for their expansion must be taken from the sugar producers by government, free of charge and at no cost....

> The government reacted simply by sending Ascria an "acknowledgement" and the Minister of Local Government refused to offer any comment to the press....
>
> On December 24, Christmas Eve, Kwayana sent a letter to the Sugar Producers' Association informing them of Ascria's letter to the Minister of Local Government, and at the same time set out a five-point demand for the release of sugar lands to the landless people who want to build their own homes.
>
> The five demands included one calling on the sugar industry to declare itself "prepared to transfer to approved bodies such as cooperatives, preferably, and to local government bodies all disposable lands; capital and interest payments due to it by cooperatives or non-speculating small holders for housing land and declare itself willing as a historic duty to transfer the holdings to applicants."
>
> Ascria subsequently contacted Indian religious and cultural organizations, urging their cooperation in the "land-to-the-people" campaign in the interest of the descendants of slaves and indentured immigrants.
>
> Later it warned that the sugar plantations were following a "greedy policy" and called on workers and farmers to join in a "peasant revolt" against "feudal capitalism"....
>
> ....by the time the nation had celebrated the Muslim religious festival of Eid-ul-Axha, the country was learning of the group of sugar workers, villagers, cane farmers and even residents from Georgetown who were squatting on land south of the railway line at Vryheid's Lust. And before long the squatting exercise had brought large tracts of sugar lands under the occupation of squatters in areas stretching from Turkeyen to Enmore (Guyana Graphic), January 28, 1973).

Although the total number of squatters has not been definitely established, photos of various squatters' groups show that numbers in the main squatting areas were large (i.e., totalling several thousand) and, perhaps more importantly, that groups of squatters were roughly equally divided between Indo- and Afro-Guyanese.

The success of ASCRIA's appeal in initiating the inter-ethnic cooperation exhibited by squatters' groups lay in the fact that it was

based upon working class consciousness, viz., on the allegation that both Indo- and Afro-Guyanese workers and farmers had been exploited by Bookers. As ASCRIA Bulletin published in early February 1973 epitomized ASCRIA's appeal to Indo- and Afro-Guyanese workers and farmers.

> Bookers took away the....Land by Fraud in 1917. They were protected and assisted by the colonial system. If the colonial system is over, the people must get back their land. All of it, backdam and front.

The Bulletin urged Indo- and Afro-Guyanese to unite and beware of attempts by Bookers to divide and rule:

> This is not a party fight. If any part is paid by Bookers, let them confess. This is the People's fight. We seek no votes, no membership.
>
> Workers, farmers, youth, elders, all descendants of slaves and indentured, belonging to any party or not.... we appeal to you to show the world that you are not stooges. Black people, remember how you were used by Bookers in 1964 [i.e., to create "racial" and political disunity, thus protecting the interests of Bookers]. Don't let anyone use you again. Africans must, along with the Indians, inherit imperialist property. Or the Bakra will Divide and rule.*

ASCRIA urged squatters to use "Creolese" slogans, such as "Down wid Booka Powa" to symbolize the unity of non-white workers and farmers in their struggle against Bookers (ASCRIA Bulletin, February, 1973).

The PPP and the PNC reacted to the squatters' movement quickly. In a press statement released on January 20, 1973, the PPP expressed support for the squatters. On the same day, Bookers warned that the squatters were breaking the law, and added that this could lead to the

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* This appeal seems to contradict Despres' claim that, according to ASCRIA policy, "Africans have to be re-established on the land, and it makes little difference whether the land is presently occupied by the sugar industry or by East Indians...." (1975: 103). Presumably, this was written before the complete nationalization of Bookers' land holdings and sugar estates.

erosion of law and order in the community generally. And, on January 21, PNC Minister of Housing, Steve Naraine, told squatters that they must give up the land that they were "illegally occupying." The Minister alluded to his government's achievements in the field of housing, and also warned,

> Unless we control the situation now we may find that we will not be fighting foreigners who run the sugar estate lands, but fighting among ourselves....(Guyana Graphic, January 22, 1973).

On the next day, Dr. Ptolemy Reid, Minister of National Development and Agriculture, went on national radio and announced a takeover of all Bookers-owned residential land, and a government program to redistribute the land to those in need. In the same broadcast, Dr. Reid gave squatters 48 hours to remove themselves from squatting areas.

ASCRIA immediately urged squatters to remain in squatting areas, and to redistribute the land among themselves according to 19 principles, including the following:

> The land to be seized is Sugar Lands. Make some attempt to find out if the land you need is SUGAR COMPANY LAND.
>
> If you find out for certain that you are NOT on sugar land, but on privately owned land, leave it at once.
>
> This is a PEOPLE'S movement. You cannot leave out people because of their party membership. But if they are undermining the move, do not put them on the leadership committee. This is not a movement against Government of Opposition but against FEUDALISM-SUGAR AS LANDLORD.
>
> There must be strict rules about who can take up land. The LANDLESS people must be served first. There is no room for speculators. If you have land you cannot come before a comrade who has none. The committee must limit the number from each house.

> There will be communities dominated by Indians. There will be communities dominated by Africans. Whoever is a majority must protect the minority.
>
> Where the same land is required by an African and an Indian community, we must first make an equal division of the SUGAR LANDS. There can be NO AGREEMENT without EQUALITY.* (ASCRIA Bulletin, late January, 1973

On January 23, 1973 the PPP issued a statement supporting

> ....Many of the nineteen points set out by ASCRIA on this land question, particularly its advice that the squatters....form themselves in People's Committees which must report direct to those involved; that only landless people must get land and to beware of speculators.

While the PPP also supported the subsequent government takeover of Bookers' residential land, it urged the PNC to pay no compensation to Bookers, and to make lots available to landless people at no cost.

The PNC claimed that ASCRIA's appeal to squatters to remain on the land in spite of the government takeover and 48-hour ultimatum was part of a plot to remove the PNC from power. An editorial in the government-owned Daily Chronicle of January 24, 1973 stated,

> The more Ascria churns out the releases calling for peace, equality and cooperation, the more emerges a sinister plan to foment breaches of the peace and create divisions in our society.
>
> Ascria tells the squatters that "Ascria is not seeking your membership and your vote". Yet the whole exercise is aimed at achieving political ends -- an attempt to cause a breakdown in law and order and try as best it could to put the Government out of office....
>
> ...Ascria knows that if the squatters reject all pleas and defy the order to quit their lots, Government will be reluctantly compelled to move them - and a dangerous situation may arise. Ascria will of course be on hand to wail about the People's Government "persecuting" its own people.

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* Again, this appeal contradicts Despres' claim that ASCRIA is interested in seizing land from Indo-Guyanese.

> But what can Government do in the circumstances? Abdicate its responsibility to uphold the rule of law? Let squatters run wild taking over lands that are privately owned or held by the Government? Government should not shrink from its clear duty. Today it may be the land. Tomorrow it may be cars, houses and even factories. History shows mob rule leads to anarchy (Daily Chronicle, January 24, 1973).

By January 24, 1973, most of the squatters were gone from the squatting areas. While the government claimed that the police action ("Operation Peace and Love") was aimed at clearing squatting areas without violence, the PPP and ASCRIA claimed that squatters had often been forcibly evicted.

I was living in an East Coast Demerara village shortly after the squatters' movement ended. The village had a population of approximately 7,860 made up of roughly two-thirds Indo-Guyanese and one-third Afro-Guyanese. Most villagers who were employed worked at a nearby Bookers sugar estate or at a nearby Government Agricultural Experimental Station. Some Afro-Guyanese villagers had white-collar jobs in or near the village, or in Georgetown. Approximately 100 villagers raised sugar cane on small plots that they owned or rented from the village council. Although I was unable to conduct systematic research,* I was able to form an impression of the impact that the squatters' movement had upon villagers. Reaction of villagers to the squatters' movement was mixed. In general, Indo- and Afro-Guyanese workers and farmers thought that the squatters were justified. Middle-class Indo-Guyanese generally expressed agreement with the government decisions to take over and redistribute all unused residential land owned by Bookers, but they were often unhappy with the activities of ASCRIA and the squatters.

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* See Appendix III.

One member of this group remarked, "they should have waited for the government". In other words, instead of squatting, landless Indo- and Afro-Guyanese should have waited for the PNC regime to nationalize and then redistribute Bookers' residential land. Many of the less well-to-do villagers felt that if the squatters had "waited for the government". the government might not have moved to take over Bookers' land.

In a series of 24 unstructured interviews conducted from June to October 1973 in households of Afro-Guyanese workers and farmers along the main drainage trench, 21 respondents claimed that the squatters' movement had been a good thing for Guyana. Although I do not claim that these responses represent a statistically representative sample of Afro-Guyanese workers and farmers in East Coast Demerara, several informants claimed that this sentiment regarding the squatters' movement was shared by most Afro-Guyanese ECD residents. It seems significant that while several Afro-Guyanese villagers refused to be interviewed shortly before the 1973 election, presumably because they feared that I was not sympathetic to the PNC,* many others, who also may have harbored this suspicion, expressed the view that the squatters' movement was good for Guyana. The fact that this view was expressed, even though it might have played into the hands of PPP or ASCRIA propagandists, seems to indicate that informants, who were all PNC supporters, were responding honestly. Also, a field assistant who was an Afro-Guyanese civil servant and a PNC supporter, received similar responses. If informants had been afraid that PNC officials would be angry at such responses, it seems that they would have expressed views reflecting hostility or

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* See Appendix III.

neutrality regarding the squatters' movement in front of this field assistant. The fact that they did not do so indicates that their responses were probably honest.

In another series of 20 unstructured interviews conducted in households of Indo-Guyanese workers and farmers along the main drainage trench, all respondents claimed that the squatters' movement had been a good thing for Guyana. The Indo-Guyanese owners of the largest shops in the village also claimed that they had supported the squatters.

It is significant that most workers and farmers, irrespective of ethnic affiliation, supported the squatters on the grounds that "people" or "poor people" needed land. They did <u>not</u> say that "Indians needed land" or that "Africans needed land". And no workers, farmers, or members of their families expressed concern for the "rights" of Bookers or for "property rights" in general. They seldom mentioned Bookers at all, except to say that poor people needed Bookers' land. Although one informant claimed that some squatters already owned land, and were trying to obtain more under false pretenses, and although five Indo-Guyanese informants were afraid that a disproportionate amount of land would be given to Afro-Guyanese by the PNC government, there was general agreement that people, especially poor people, needed land, irrespective of "race". The fact that large numbers of Indo- and Afro-Guyanese workers and farmers throughout Guyana responded to an appeal based upon the idea of resistance to Bookers seems to indicate the presence of some degree of working class consciousness among the squatters and their supporters.

The success of ASCRIA in promoting cooperation between Indo- and Afro-Guyanese in the squatters' movement has important implications for

theories of inter-ethnic relations in Guyana. If, as Despres claimed, political strategies based upon competition for scarce resources can promote conflict between ethnic groups and promote the growth of ethnic boundaries (1967), the success of the squatters' movement shows that a political strategy based upon working class consciousness and resistance to foreign entrepreneurs can promote cooperation between Indo- and Afro-Guyanese workers and farmers. Despres' notion of political strategies based upon plural differences and inter-ethnic competition for scarce resources has little to say regarding phenomena such as the squatters' movement.

There have been other recent instances of cooperation between Indo- and Afro-Guyanese in struggles against U.S. and British corporations and governments. ASCRIA joined the PPP in 1970 in successfully pressuring the PNC government to completely nationalize Alcan's bauxite extraction operation (the Demerara Bauxite Company, or Demba). There has also been cooperation in the field of foreign policy. The PPP, ASCRIA, and the PNC all supported the MPLA during the Angolan War. These instances of cooperation, however, took place almost entirely on a formal level -- that is, they only involved statements of consistent policies by PPP, ASCRIA, and PNC leaders. They did not involve much face-to-face contact and cooperation between large numbers of Afro- and Indo-Guyanese. The squatters' movement, on the other hand, did involve such activity.

While the squatters' movement represented a tendency toward inter-ethnic cooperation based upon working class consciousness in struggle against foreign capital, the election of 1973 represented the opposite tendency, viz., inter-ethnic conflict based largely upon racist

ideology and competition for scarce resources.

Section 2 - The Election of 1973

On May 30, 1973, the PNC government proposed legislation to lower the voting age to 18. The PPP objected to this, in spite of the fact that the number of 18-21 year old Indo-Guyanese PPP supporters was probably greater than the number of 18-21 year old Afro-Guyanese PNC supporters, on the grounds that the PNC would manipulate registration of 18-21 year old voters in such a way that the PNC would receive the vast majority of the 18-21 year old votes (see J. Jagan 1974 regarding methods of electoral manipulation in Guyana). The PNC responded by claiming that the PPP was being hypocritical on this issue since the PPP had proposed lowering the voting age to 18 while it was in office. The PNC also claimed that the PPP was afraid of giving young people the vote because so many of them were PNC supporters. After this exchange, Prime Minister Burnham called an election for July 16, 1973.

PPP leaders decided to contest the election in spite of their expectation that it would be rigged in favor of the PNC. Some PPP activists believed that the massive rigging which would be necessary for a PNC "victory" would destroy any remaining pretense of "democracy" left in Guyana, or that, along with minor opposition parties, they would command such strength that the PNC would not dare rig the election for fear of mass discontent and anti-government action.

Besides the PPP, the United Force (UF), which had two members in the legislature, contested the election. Also, two new political parties were formed. The People's Democratic Movement (PDM) was formed and led by Mr. LLewellyn John, the former PNC minister of home affairs, who promised to end PNC nepotism and corruption, to restore civil rights,

and to restore electoral freedom. The Liberator Party, led by J.H.M. Richmond (an Afro-Guyanese businessman), and Dr. Fielden Singh (an Indo-Guyanese physician and businessman), united with the UF and promised electoral reform, freedom of press, and policies designed to attract "development capital" from advanced capitalist nations.

Shortly after notice of the election was given, rumours began to circulate that the PNC "expected" to win a 2/3 legislative majority which would enable them to change the constitution, outlaw all opposition parties, and turn Guyana into a one-party state. In order to dispell such rumours, Burnham declared that representatives of all political parties would be present during voting, transportation of ballots, and counting of ballots in order to insure that the election would be honestly conducted. There was a concerted PNC effort to win the votes of Afro-Guyanese in Georgetown who had been hit hard by inflation and banning of certain staples (e.g., "English" potatoes) involved in the PNC policy of import substitution. PNC activists claimed that Afro-Guyanese in Georgetown might be so assured of Burnham's victory that they might not bother to vote.

PPP activists accused the PNC of corruption, incompetence, extravagance, racial discrimination against Indo-Guyanese, and subservience to Bookers and the U.S. government. They drew attention to inflation, mass unemployment, deterioration of social services, labour problems, inadequate medical facilities, housing shortages, food shortages, etc., and claimed that a PPP government could solve these problems by starting Guyana on the path of socialism. PNC activists, in turn, accused the PPP of hypocrisy on the issue of the voting age, fomenting racial politics, and subservience to Moscow. They also

claimed that their government had made great gains in providing "economic development" for Guyana.

There were no overt ethnic appeals by PNC or PPP political activists. However, the historical context of the election campaign insured that practically every political appeal had covert ethnic overtones. The PPP was widely viewed as a vehicle for gaining scarce economic resources for its Indo-Guyanese supporters, and the PNC was widely viewed as a vehicle for gaining scarce economic resources for its Afro-Guyanese supporters. Many Indo-Guyanese claimed that the PNC government had systematically given government jobs and other sorts of economic resources to its Afro-Guyanese supporters while denying them to better-qualified Indo-Guyanese. They believed that a PPP government would redress this imbalance. Some Indo-Guyanese PPP supporters used former ruling class "racial" stereotypes to justify their belief that the government should give more jobs to Indo-Guyanese. They sometimes claimed that Indo-Guyanese, because of their allegedly "superior racial characteristics", had built up Guyana economically, and therefore deserved to govern it (i.e., to get the bulk of economic resources dispensed by the government). Similarly, many Afro-Guyanese justified the view that the PNC should favor Afro-Guyanese by arguing that Blacks had built up Guyana economically, but that the fruits of their labour had been stolen, first by colonialism, and later by Indians, who had been favoured by the colonialists. The former ruling class "racial" stereotype of Indians as "stingy" and "miserly" was often invoked to justify this argument. Despres writes,

> ....As an industry, the government generates 10 percent of the GDP and contributes 19 percent to the employed labor force. Thus, apart from agriculture, the government is the largest consumer of labor in the country.

> While all elements of the population look to the government for favors and support, the overwhelming majority of Africans view their control of the government as an absolute prerequisite of their economic survival. As a consequence, competition for the government and for the resources which the government commands is fierce among Africans and Indians (1975: 99).

Newly-refreshed memories of the inter-ethnic violence of the 1960's added to the tension as the 1973 election drew near.

While the "racial" stereotypes cited above were never openly used in political speeches by PNC or PPP candidates, they were often repeated in private conversations within each major ethnic section. Indo-Guyanese PPP supporters would constantly complain amongst themselves that all government jobs and scholarships were given to Blacks, while better qualified Indo-Guyanese were unemployed. While a few Indo-Guyanese workers in East Coast Demerara villages argued that Jagan would provide more economic benefits for all poor people, irrespective of "race", most of them used the argument that a PPP government would redress inequalities in government allocation of scarce resources. Afro-Guyanese PNC supporters, on the other hand, constantly warned each other that a PPP victory would mean that the economic benefits that the PNC had brought them (e.g., jobs and scholarships) would be taken away and given to Indians.

In a context where such arguments were constantly in the minds of voters, any PNC or PPP political activity (e.g., speeches, posters, rallies, etc.) inevitably assumed ethnic overtones. And, as election day approached, a series of incidents sharpened ethnic and political tensions to a point where mass racial violence seemed likely.

On June 3, PPP meetings at Buxton and Golden Grove were attacked with rocks and clubs by young, Afro-Guyanese PNC supporters who arrived

in buses, and who were not residents of Buxton or Golden Grove. Although several PPP supporters had to be hospitalized after the attack, no arrests were made. News of these incidents was not reported on the radio or in pro-PNC newspapers. PPP activists retaliated by disrupting a PNC meeting at Enmore on June 24. No persons were hurt, but 50 PPP supporters were arrested and charged. The incident received extensive coverage in the press (including the PNC newspapers) and on the radio. PDM and Liberator activities were constantly disrupted and sabotaged by PNC activists.

On Sunday, June 24, two Afro-Guyanese soldiers who were riding a small motorcycle were killed in a road accident on the main coastal road near Beterverwagting. One of the soldiers had grown up in Beterverwagting and had many friends and relatives there. According to rumours among Afro-Guyanese residents of the East Coast, the motorcycle had been deliberately "sandwiched" between a Landrover and a passenger car, both driven by PPP activists. According to later Afro-Guyanese rumours, the bodies of the soldiers were mutilated after the crash. When the ethnically mixed audience left the BV-T cinema after the Sunday night film, several Indo-Guyanese youths, including at least one Indo-Guyanese PNC supporter, were badly beaten by young Afro-Guyanese males. The PNC-controlled newspapers, New Nation and Daily Chronicle urged Afro-Guyanese PNC supporters to refrain from further violence. They claimed that the PPP was trying to provoke inter-ethnic violence in order to polarize the country along "racial" lines and force "the multitudes" of Indo-Guyanese PNC supporters to vote for Jagan.

The incident of the motorcycle accident brought East Coast Demerara to the brink of mass inter-ethnic violence. Throughout the following

week, Indo-Guyanese parents kept their children out of school in several East Coast Demerara villages.

In the predominantly Afro-Guyanese ECD village of Buxton, in late June, 1973, an Indo-Guyanese fisherman returning with his son from a day's fishing was killed, and his son was badly chopped with a cutlass, presumably by Afro-Guyanese. News of this incident immediately brought the entire East Coast to the brink of mass inter-ethnic violence for a second time. On July 12, 1973 Burnham went on the radio and claimed that the road accident in which the two soldiers were killed had truly been "an accident", and promised long prison terms to anyone who caused violence during the remainder of the election period. The latter was seen as a thinly-veiled threat to PPP activists who had been talking of surrounding polling places in order to insure that no rigging took place. Many Afro-Guyanese PNC supporters in ECD claimed that, although Burnham had said the deaths of the two soldiers were accidental, he "really knew" that the "accident" had been staged by the PPP as part of a plan to polarize the nation along "racial" lines.

After Burnham's radio address, constant military and police patrols were mounted in all heavily populated coastal areas. Heavy, British-made GDF lorries filled with soldiers and/or policemen, armed mostly with Bren and Sten guns, were constantly in evidence. Roadblocks and vehicle searches on the main coastal road were a nighly occurrence, and many PPP activists were arrested and held without charge. There were not many more incidents of inter-ethnic violence before the election.

After the polling on July 16, 1973 ballot boxes from most rural areas were collected by the GFD and transported for counting to

Georgetown. Representatives of opposition parties, who, Burnham had promised, could accompany the boxes to counting centres and observe the counting, were forced away from the boxes, often at gunpoint. In some cases, the GDF took 48 hours to transport the ballot boxes to the counting centre in the Georgetown police and army compound.

At one polling station in Berbice, PPP supporters absconded with a ballot box and counted the ballots themselves. Strong PNC supporters in ECD, who spoke of a "massive swing" of Corentine East Indians to the PNC because of the PNC government's alleged successes in its policies affecting rice farmers, said that it was "obvious" that the ballot box was stolen so that PPP supporters could stuff it and thus make up their losses. PNC activists also claimed that the seizure of ballot boxes by the GDF was necessitated by the "threat" of PPP interference in the election.

One PPP candidate who was supposed to accompany a ballot box from a polling station in ECD and observe the counting of the ballots testified,

> All the ballot boxes were transported to the Beterverwagting Police Station and were put in the Ministry of Works and Hydraulics lorry with license number GA 9236 and left for Georgetown about 9:30 p.m. I was not permitted to travel in the truck although I protested to the Returning Officer. He told me that he had no control over that....
>
> We left the Sparendaam police station about 10 p.m. and arrived at the entrance to the GDF Compound about 10:30 p.m. The truck with the boxes went into the GDF compound and we were prevented from entering the compound. Two lorries with PNC activists were, however, allowed to enter the compound.
>
> We arrived at the GTI (the Counting Centre) about 10:45 p.m. The Returning Officer arrived about 11:30 p.m. with his two assistants and left about 1:00 a.m. in disgust after I kept asking him repeatedly about the boxes (Cited in J.Jagan 1974: 80-81).

As expected, Burnham and the PNC received a 2/3 majority in the election. According to the Guyana Graphic of July 20, 1973 the PNC received 243,803 votes (70.15%) and won 37 seats; the PPP received 92,374 votes (26.51%)and won 14 seats; the Liberator Party and the UF received 9,580 votes (2.75%) and won 2 seats; and the PDM received 2,053 votes (.55%) and won no seats.

It was rumoured after the election that when the earliest election returns from the PNC "strongholds" in Georgetown indicated that Burnham was doing poorly because of a high abstention rate, he ordered the GDF into action, and that overzealous PNC cadres acted too hastily in making sure that the election came out "right", i.e., in favour of the PNC. Documentation regarding irregularities in the 1973 election is extensive, and need not be treated here (see J. Jagan 1974).

PPP, Liberator, and PDM supporters were incensed by the conduct and results of the election. Jagan urged PPP supporters to undertake a campaign of "civil disobedience" to protest the election. Although the campaign enjoyed some success in Berbice and Essequibo, it was not too successful in Georgetown and on East Coast Demerara, especially after Burnham threatened government employees who participated in the campaign with dismissal. In ECD villages, Indo-Guyanese shopkeepers did not close their shops during the campaign for fear of reprisals by Afro-Guyanese PNC activists.

Isolated incidents of political violence occurred for some weeks after the election, particularly on East Bank Demerara where the homes of several PPP activists were burned. Armed police and GDF patrols were maintained and, at one point, Jagan was briefly arrested in Berbice for carrying a gun in his car without a permit, in spite of the fact that the gun was registered and that the permit was in Georgetown.

Section 3 - U.S. and British Government Policy and Inter-Ethnic Relations

As we have seen in previous chapters, conflict between subordinated ethnic groups during colonial times often stemmed from differential allocation of economic benefits and burdens to different subordinated ethnic groups by the ruling class. The resulting differences in the social and economic positions of different subordinated ethnic groups were often 'explained' in terms of ruling class racist ideology. This pattern has continued in contemporary Guyanese political-economy in the sense that the political strategy which promotes inter-ethnic conflict continues to be based upon differential allocation of economic benefits among Indo- and Afro-Guyanese. Specifically, the PNC allocates a disproportionately large amount of scarce economic resources to Afro-Guyanese in order to retain their political support. As in many ex-colonies, these scarce resources include land, jobs, places in vocational training programmes, and government scholarships. Indo-Guyanese resentment of such disproportionate allocation figures prominently in contemporary Guyanese politics. As in the past, the different economic and social positions of different ethnic groups are often 'explained' in terms of the racial stereotypes of the former ruling class.

While differential allocation can no longer be practiced directly by a predominantly white ruling class with Anglo-American support as it was during colonial times, the practices and policies of the U.S. government often make it possible for the current PNC regime to do so. Specifically, the U.S. government, through various forms of economic aid, enables the Burnham regime to provide a disproportionately large amount of economic resources to Afro-Guyanese PNC supporters in order to retain their political allegiance. For example, in ECD many Afro-

Guyanese youths from poor families have received PNC-sponsored training in the U.S. which was financed by the U.S. government. Many Afro-Guyanese youths are especially interested in following in the footsteps of others who have obtained scholarships for study at the Tuskegee Intitute in Alabama (see Vernon 1972: 11-16) Most youths who are chosen by the PNC to study in the U.S. are assured of relatively high-paying government jobs upon completion of their training.

Even the 1971 nationalization of Alcan's bauxite extraction operation was financed, in part, by an $8 million (U.S.) loan from the Chase Manhatten Bank (see Despres 1975: 98). Shortly after this loan was made, the World Bank granted a $10 million (U.S.) loan to the Guyanese government, and the U.S. government renewed Guyana's sugar quota (Jagan 1972: 407). Furthermore, between 1946 and 1973, the U.S. government furnished $9.6 million (U.S.) to train and equip Guyana's security forces (North American Congress on Latin America 1973: 26). Most of this aid has been furnished since Burnham came to power in 1964. The PNC regime has insured that such training and equipment are monopolized by Afro-Guyanese PNC supporters who make up the majority of army and police personnel.

Until its recent nationalization, Bookers' sugar estates also pursued politics which contributed to the maintenance of differential allocation of resources. On Bookers' sugar estates, unskilled, low-paid labourers were mostly Indo-Guyanese, and skilled, highly-paid labourers were mostly Afro-Guyanese. Until the early 1970's these groups belonged to different trade unions. Bookers refused to recognize the GAWU, which commanded the support of most unskilled Indo-Guyanese sugar workers. Thus, the representatives of skilled Afro-Guyanese sugar workers could bargain with Bookers, while GAWU representatives could

not.* Bookers' refusal to recognize the GAWU was supported by the PNC government and several U.S.-controlled "international" labour organizations operating in Guyana. All of these circumstances promoted the continuity of political-ethnic conflict and maintenance of ethnic boundaries between Indo- and Afro-Guyanese sugar workers.

These considerations show that, just as the policies of differential allocation practiced by the ruling class during colonial times depended, to a large extent, upon support from the U.S. government. Presumably, the U.S. government has provided this aid in order to secure Burnham's support upon various issues in international politics, and, more importantly, to keep the PPP out of power. Insofar as policies of differential allocation promote the maintenance of ethnic boundaries and inter-ethnic conflict, the latter phenomena cannot be fully understood without reference to the policies and practices of the U.S. government and ruling class with regard to Guyana.

While differential allocation of government jobs, training, contracts, etc., played an important role in the 1973 election campaign, a widespread awareness of economic scarcity (e.g., lack of housing, food,, jobs, education, social services, etc.) was also an important political issue during the election period. Economic scarcity was sometimes explained by Indo-Guyanese PPP supporters in terms of "squandermania" of the PNC government. This, in turn, was sometimes "explained" in terms of the racial stereotypes of Blacks that had been used by the former ruling class. On the other hand, ASCRIA activists and the PPP

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* It is probable that many Indo-Guyanese GAWU members were replaced by Afro-Guyanese PNC supporters in the PNC government's attempt to break the 1977-1978 GAWU strike in the nationalized sugar industry.

activists often related economic scarcity to "imperialist exploitation", viz., to the practices and policies of Bookers, Alcan, various foreign banks, and the U.S. and British governments. In the case of the squatters' movement, scarcity of residential land was explained by ASCRIA and the PPP in terms of Bookers' exploitation of Indo- and Afro-Guyanese workers and farmers. As we have seen, this particular explanation of economic scarcity had a mass appeal which allowed the development of unity between Indo- and Afro-Guyanese workers and farmers in the struggle for redistribution of Bookers-owned land.

The squatters' movement and the 1973 election period exemplify the coexistence of tendencies toward class cooperation and working class consciousness with tendencies toward inter-ethnic conflict and ruling class racist ideology that characterized Guyanese colonial history. The fact that squatters' groups composed of Indo- and Afro-Guyanese were active in some areas of ECD during the period immediately prior to the election, and throughout the election period of July and August, 1973, indicated that cooperation between Indo- and Afro-Guyanese based upon the class appeals of ASCRIA, was present even during the most critical outbreaks of inter-ethnic conflict and racist ideology which occurred during the election period. As with analyses of major instances of inter-ethnic conflict and cooperation in Guyanese colonial history, attempts to understand post-colonial Guyanese social and political processes must take such coexisting tendencies into account. Also, as in the case of Guyanese colonial history, class struggle, differential allocation, inter-ethnic struggle and racist ideology cannot be understood without reference to the policies and practices of Anglo-American governments and ruling classes.

Section 4 - Class, Ethnicity and the Future of Guyana

Since independence, the PNC government has nationalized the major means of production in Guyana. It has had PPP support for nationalization of the bauxite and sugar industries, but, in both cases, the PPP has protested that the compensation promised to the former owners was too high. At the same time, the bulk of the financial and retail sectors remains in private - often foreign - hands. While nationalization of the commanding heights of the economy was always a major plank in the PPP political platform, and PNC government has not yet adopted the PPP policy of building up Guyana's productive resources on the basis of economic ties with the socialist countries. This is a key issue in any discussion of ethnic boundaries and conflict in contemporary Guyana because it seems probable that, if the PNC government could build new industries and dispense the jobs these industries would provide in a way that is perceived as fair by different ethnic sections, this would remove one of the structural bases of ethnic boundaries and conflict in Guyanese social processes - viz., differential allocation. As working class members of each major ethnic section got jobs in new, state-owned industries, the social and economic discrepancies between different ethnic sections created by past and present policies of differential allocation would gradually disappear, and it would thus become more difficult to "explain" such discrepancies in terms of the racial stereotypes of the former ruling class. However, at the present time, these possibilities seem remote. Plans for the glass factory (to be built with Hungarian assistance), the rice-bran oil factory (to be developed by the GDR), and the hydro-electric wood-pulp project (to be

developed with Cuban aid) have not been revived, and no new projects of this nature have apparently been planned. In the early 1970's, a textile factory was to be built with assistance from the People's Republic of China, but this scheme has not materialized. In 1973, both the Engelhard Corporation* and the GDR expressed interest in developing a kaolin extraction operation, but neither of these proposals has come to fruition. In short, the PNC government has not built up productive resources on the basis of economic ties with the socialist countries.**

Other recent political and economic developments are relevant to the persistence of ethnic boundaries and conflict in Guyana. Because of alleged PNC rigging during the 1973 election, the PPP refused to participate in the government. However, PNC initiatives in nationalizing Bookers, supporting the MPLA in Angola, and permitting legal recognition of the GAWU (i.e., policies that have long been advocated by the PPP), led the PPP to assume a position of "critical support" for the PNC regime. PPP members who were elected in 1973 have now taken their seats in the legislature.

The PPP stance of "critical support" must be understood in light of the fact that, for some years, PPP activists have claimed that they wish to develop their party ideologically - i.e., to insure that members are in the party because of a commitment to Marxist-Leninist ideology and the interests of the working class, not because of a desire to promote their personal interests or the "racial" interests of Indo-Guyanese.

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* The Engelhard Corporation has extensive gold mining interests in South Africa.

** Recently (winter, 1977), there was a Soviet trade mission in Guyana which may come up with some proposals for construction of major productive enterprises with Soviet assistance.

In this connection, it should be noted that the PPP has never been an "all-Indian" party. Many of the wealthiest Indo-Guyanese businessmen are ardent PNC supporters, and many middle-class Indo-Guyanese have expressed dissatisfaction with PPP leadership and policies. Other PPP supporters believe that the PPP should restrict its activities to the promotion of "Indo-Guyanese interests" rather than the promotion of the interests of the entire working class. The recent PPP policy of "critical support" for the Burnham regime will probably drive many of the latter group out of the party. They will leave because they regard any cooperation with Afro-Guyanese PNC supporters as a "sell-out to the enemy". This can only have the effect of making the PPP seem less like a party whose sole aim is the promotion of "Indo-Guyanese interests". The adoption of the stance of "critical support" by the PPP may thus go far toward bringing about the ideological shift to the left that PPP leaders have been seeking. While Despres' claim that the PPP's primary political strategy is based upon disproportionate allocation of scarce resources to Indo-Guyanese seemed questionable for the turbulent period of the early 1960's, it seems even more questionable now in light of the PPP's current policy of "critical support". If the PPP's political strategy were based solely upon promotion of "Indo-Guyanese interests", it would concentrate on attacking the PNC for its alleged failure to extend a "fair share" of resources to Indo-Guyanese, and would never have adopted a position of "critical support". The policy of "critical support" will, if anything, reduce the tendency toward political cleavage along ethnic lines, and thus reduce the possibility of inter-ethnic conflict.

While it is a mistake to view the PPP as an "all-Indian" party,

it is equally mistaken to view the PNC as an "all-African" party that commands the unswerving support of all Afro-Guyanese. The role of ASCRIA among Afro-Guyanese workers and farmers has already been noted, as well as the presence of many wealthy Indo-Guyanese in the ranks of the PNC.

Section 5 - Conclusion

It has been shown in this dissertation that Guyanese colonial history was characterized by two contradictory tendencies: a tendency toward cooperation between workers and farmers from subordinated ethnic groups in political and economic struggles against the ruling class, and a tendency toward generation and persistence of ethnic boundaries and conflict. It has been shown that neither tendency can be understood apart from a class perspective. Theoretical approaches to inter-ethnic conflict and maintenance of ethnic boundaries in Guyana which are not based upon a class perspective either (1) do not explore the policies and practices of the Guyanese ruling class and its allies in the British and U.S. governments which created and maintained conflict and boundaries between subordinated ethnic groups; or (2) ignore the instances of inter-ethnic cooperation along class lines in struggles against the ruling class for better economic and social conditions which occurred throughout Guyanese colonial history. In other words, they do not emphasize the existence of, or relations between, the contradictory tendencies noted above.

It has been shown that conflict between subordinated ethnic groups throughout Guyanese colonial history was engendered by ruling class policies and practices of disproportionate allocation of economic benefits and burdens to different subordinated ethnic groups. The

resulting disparities between social and economic conditions of these groups were often "explained" by members of the ruling class and by members of subordinated ethnic groups in terms of ruling class racial stereotypes which, because of ruling class control of most sources of ideology, permeated all aspects of Guyanese society. This process had several effects: (1) it masked the actual cause of economic scarcity and disparities in the social and economic positions of subordinated ethnic groups, viz., ruling class exploitation and differential allocation of economic benefits and burdens; (2) it promoted the persistence of conflict and ethnic boundaries between subordinated ethnic groups; and (3) it inhibited unity between workers and farmers in subordinated ethnic groups in struggles against the ruling class. In spite of these effects, significant instances of cooperation between workers and farmers from different subordinated ethnic groups in political and economic struggles against the ruling class occurred throughout Guyanese colonial history. These instances of cooperation generally occurred in response to ruling class attempts to cut overheads by retrenchment and wage reductions in the face of capitalist economic crises. The Indo- and Afro-Guyanese workers and farmers who joined in industrial and political struggles against the ruling class were often motivated by working class consciousness and, later, by Marxist-Leninist ideology.

Finally, it has been shown that contradictory tendencies toward inter-ethnic conflict and inter-ethnic cooperation along class lines persist, in somewhat altered form, in post-colonial Guyanese society. Because of the coexistence of these tendencies and their relationship to foreign influence in Guyana, it is very difficult to make predictions about the direction that inter-ethnic relations in Guyana will take.

However, it is possible to say that, because of the presence of the contradictory tendencies noted above, the potential for a significant lessening of inter-ethnic conflict and a softening of ethnic boundaries, as well as the potential for a significant increase in inter-ethnic conflict and a hardening of ethnic boundaries, both exist.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

SETTLEMENT PATTERNS AND THE LABOUR FORCE, 1960-1975

Despres provides the following data regarding Africans and East Indians in the Urban population in 1960:

Percentage of Africans in Urban Areas	Percentage of Indians in Urban Areas	African Proportion of Urban Population	Indian Proportion or Urban Population
49	14	49 (1975: 93)	21

Despres adds,

> In addition to Georgetown and New Amsterdam figures for 1960 include the Mackenzie-Christianbury-Wisman (Upper Demerara River district) as an urban area. Were this area excluded, the rural-urban composition of Africans and their contribution to the urban population would remain approximately the same (49 percent), but the East Indian proportion of the urban population would increase to 23 percent. In other words, the inclusion of this district significantly expands the urban population base but because East Indians are more concentrated in Georgetown and New Amsterdam, it diminishes their contribution to the total urban population (1975: 93).

This demographic pattern reflects the 1975 occupational pattern. The labour force of the bauxite industry, located mainly in the 'urban' area of Mackenzie (now called Linden after Prime Minister Burnham) employed three percent of the labour force of Guyana. However, 95% of the workers in the bauxite industry were Afro-Guyanese (Despres 1975: 98). The minority of Indo-Guyanese who lived in Mackenzie-Christianbury-Wismar were driven away during the riots of 1964.

The sugar industry, which employed approximately 18% of the labour force in 1975, is located mainly in rural areas. Approximately 85% of all sugar workers were Indo-Guyanese (Despres 1975: 98).

Appendix I (continued)

Despres writes,

> ....rice agriculture and mixed farming, including food processing....contribute even more than does sugar to the employed labour force (21 percent). ....these also are primarily domains of East Indian employment. Still another important source of employment is the distribution industry. It contributes 14% to the employed labour force. Much of this employment is taken up by the export-import trade, particularly in bauxite, sugar, and rice, and it provides for dock-workers, most of whom are African. However, wholesale-retail trade is primarily in the hands of expatriate firms and East Indian merchants and shopkeepers. The latter particularly are inclined to give employment to East Indians.
>
> Considering the imbalance of Indians and Africans employed in these core industries, it is not surprising that Africans comprise the majority of the unemployed in Guyana. (1975: 98-99).

APPENDIX II

WAGES AND PRICES AROUND 1842

Average earnings per week for Creole workers: $3-4, or 15s*

Task	Wage
Cutting a punt-load of canes	$1, or 4s 2d
Cleaning a field	2 guilders per 100 roods
Construction	2-3 guilders per day

Weekly Expenses

Item and Quantity	Price
2 bunches of plantains	2 guilders, or 3s 4d
Sugar, 2 lbs.	1/2 guilder, or 8d
Saltfish, 2 lbs.	1 guilder, or 1s 8d
Bread	1 guilder, or 1s 8d
Coffee or other drink	1/2 guilder, or 8d
Tobacco and sundries	1 guilder, or 1s 8d

(Dalton 1855, Vol. 1: 486)

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* Dalton's use of dollars, guilders, shillings, and pence suggests that all of these monetary units were in use in the 1840's. It is not clear whether or not these figures reflect the wage increases that Creole labourers won after a six-week strike in 1842 (Dalton 1855 Vol. 1: 481-483).

APPENDIX III

PROBLEMS AND METHODS

I had originally intended to investigate cultural differences between workers and farmers, and middle-class Indo- and Afro-Guyanese. That is, I was going to look for differences in religious practices, media consumption, recreational activities, kinship, family size, diet, etc., between Indo-Guyanese plantation workers and farmers, and well-to-do Indo-Guyanese merchants and farmers; then, I wanted to find out if similar differences existed between Afro-Guyanese workers and farmers, and well-to-do Afro-Guyanese. The existence of such differences would show that plural theorists are mistaken when they treat all Indo-Guyanese, irrespective of class, as having one culture - i.e., the same religious practices, sodalities, kinship patterns, etc. Similarly, the existence of such differences would show that plural theorists are mistaken when they treat all Afro-Guyanese, irrespective of class, as having one culture.

After much preliminary investigation, I located a village with what I considered to be sufficient numbers of Indo- and Afro-Guyanese of various social classes, to carry out my research. After renting a house in the village, I planned to carry out my research by participant observation, interviews, and a survey of a sample of village households. Shortly after I began this research, I contracted infectious hepatitis, and had to return to Canada for six months' recuperation.

When I returned to Guyana, most Guyanese were concerned with the upcoming national election of 1973. I quickly discovered that I could not complete my household survey and many interviews because many villagers, both Indo- and Afro-Guyanese, did not trust me. There are

various reasons for this. On my previous trip to Guyana, I had purchased a Simca sub-compact car from the Guyana-Import-Export Company (Gimpex) which is owned by several PPP leaders. I had not purchased the car at Gimpex for political reasons, but because Gimpex offered the best deal. When some Afro-Guyanese villagers saw me driving this car, they assumed that I was sympathetic to the PPP. They knew that I had purchased the car at Gimpex because only Gimpex imports Simcas. In spite of this, I was able to form friendships with many Afro-Guyanese villagers, including university students, PNC activists, teachers, etc. Others, however, would not talk to me. Although my car was partly responsible for this, I believe that many Guyanese, irrespective of 'race', will distrust any foreigner who starts asking questions before an election. In light of the history of foreign intervention in Guyana, including allegations of CIA activity aimed at inhibiting the PNC regime's ties with Cuba, this is not surprising.

I had similar problems with Indo-Guyanese villagers. In spite of my Simca, Indo-Guyanese were sometimes reluctant to talk to me because I had Afro-Guyanese friends and lived on the Afro-Guyanese 'side' of the village in the spare room of a house owned by a retired Afro-Guyanese teacher. I was nevertheless able to make friends with many young Indo-Guyanese men, some of whom were PPP activists. I was able to persuade them, as well as PPP leaders, that I was not a CIA agent.

In spite of the difficulties noted above, I was able to gather a great deal of information on villagers' views of the squatters' movement, and villagers' views of Guyana's current political and economic problems. Most of this information was gathered in informal conversations

with my Indo- and Afro-Guyanese friends. Whenever possible, I attempted to determine whether my friends' claims were consistent with the claims of other informants, political activists, government sources, and the employees and diplomatic personnel of foreign governments - e.g., U.S. and Canadian diplomatic staff, USAID employees, etc. I have sometimes described claims as 'rumours' when, in spite of the fact that absolute verification was impossible, these claims still apparently influenced many villagers.

So far as I know, I was the only anthropologist engaged in field work in Guyana during the 1973 election.

During May, 1973, I became aware that the inter-ethnic hostility generated by the election campaign had almost completely overshadowed the cooperation between large numbers of Indo- and Afro-Guyanese that had occurred during the squatters' movement only several months before (December, 1972 - January, 1973). This puzzled me. Obviously, inter-ethnic conflict did not always predominate in Guyanese social processes. In spite of recurrent inter-ethnic hostility and the presence of ethnic boundaries, inter-ethnic cooperation in struggles against foreign capital sometimes occurred. The squatters' movement and the inter-ethnic cooperation exhibited during the rise of the PPP were cases in point. I began to wonder if there was any pattern in the occurrence of inter-ethnic cooperation and inter-ethnic conflict. I realized that pluralist and cultural-ecological theory could not help to answer this question, since they both fail to deal with instances of inter-ethnic cooperation in struggles against foreign capital, or the ruling class.

My new interest in instances of inter-ethnic cooperation and conflict finally led me to undertake historical research in the British

Library and the Public Record Office. I hoped that an examination of Guyanese colonial history might reveal a pattern in inter-ethnic conflict and cooperation in Guyanese social processes. I now believe that such a pattern existed. It was related to ruling class policies of disproportionate allocation, ruling class racist ideology, and the recurrence of capitalist crises. Elements of this pattern persist in contemporary Guyanese social processes.

Because of teaching duties and lack of research funds, I could only spend 2-1/2 months doing historical research in the U.K. Nevertheless, I was able to find some evidence regarding ruling class policies of disproportionate allocation, and the role of ruling class racist ideology in social processes in Guyanese colonial history. The cumulative results of the foregoing theoretical considerations, as well as the fruit of my field work and historical research, are contained in this dissertation.

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